

## THE KUSHANS\*

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THE rise of the empire of the Kushans is an important landmark in the history of Central Asia. Known to Chinese historians as Kuei-shuang,<sup>1</sup> they were one of the important tribes of the Great Yüeh-chih who had been driven out from their original homeland by another warring tribe, the Hsiung-nu (Huns) and had settled in northern Bactria (see Chapter 7).

### The Early Kushans

The *Hou Han-shu* (Annals of the Later Han), compiled by Fan Yeh (c. A.D. 446), based mainly on the report submitted to the Chinese emperor by General Pan Yung in or before A.D. 125, describes their rise. Ch'iu-chiu-ch'üeh (Kujula Kadphises), the *yabghu* of Kuei-shuang, attacked and destroyed the other four *yabghu* and made himself King of the Yüeh-chih. He attacked An-hsi (Parthia) and took the territory of Kao-fu (Kabul). He also overthrew P'u-ta (Puṣkalāvati) and Chi-pin (Kashmir) and annexed these countries.<sup>2</sup> It was argued by Jit-zuzo that the five *yabghu* already existed in Bactria when the Yüeh-chih arrived, and so the Kushans could not have been the Yüeh-chih. Some scholars, therefore, refer to the Saka-Kushans in the Yüeh-chih hoard.<sup>3</sup> But Tarn<sup>4</sup> regards this theory as an unhappy offshoot of an elementary blunder that started the belief in a Saka conquest of Graeco-Bactria; most scholars now agree that the *Hou Han-shu* gives an authentic account that is trustworthy. The chronology, however, of these events relating to the rise and consolidation of the Kingdom

\* See Map 4.

1. Pulleyblank, 1962, pp. 206 et seq.

2. Pulleyblank, 1968, pp. 247–58; Zürcher, 1968, pp. 346–90.

3. Maenchen-Helfen, 1945, pp. 71–81; Puri, 1965, pp. 1 et seq.

4. Tarn, 1951, p. 287.

of Kuei-shuang is disputed because it is closely related to the history of the Great Kushans and the date of Kanishka. Excavations at Taxila and elsewhere have conclusively settled the old argument as to whether the Kadphises preceded the Kanishka group of kings<sup>5</sup> as coins of the Kadphises group, but not of Kanishka, Huvishka, etc., are found in the Early Kushan levels of Sirkap. The *Hou Han-shu* further informs us that Ch'iu-chiu-ch'üeh (Kujula Kadphises) died at an age of more than 80 and was succeeded by his son Yen-kao-chen (Vima Kadphises), who in turn destroyed T'ien-chu (India) and placed a general there to control it. The Chinese annals seem to provide a *terminus ante quem* for the Kadphises rulers of A.D. 125, the date of Pan Yung's report.

Two series of dated inscriptions provide a more precise chronological framework for the rise of the Early Kushans. The first series bears a sequence of dates, some of which are qualified by *Ayasa* ('in the era of Azes') (see Chapter 8). The Takht-i Bahi inscription of the Indo-Parthian king Gondophares is dated in the twenty-sixth year of his reign and Year 103 of the era.<sup>6</sup> Its reference to *erjhuna kapa* suggests the presence of Kujula Kadphises as a prince at the court of the Indo-Parthian king. The Panjtar stone inscription dated Year 122 of the era, nineteen years later,<sup>7</sup> is dated in the reign of an unnamed king described as the *Guṣana mahārāja*. This same term '*Guṣana*' occurs in the Manikyala inscription of the time of Kanishka<sup>8</sup> which describes Lala as *Guṣaṇavaśaṃvārdhaka*, 'the increaser of the Kushan race'. '*Guṣana*' therefore stands for '*Kuṣana*'. The Taxila silver-scroll inscription of Year 136 *Ayasa* – of the era of Azes – gives as ruler an unnamed king, 'the Great King, the King of Kings, the Son of Heaven, the Kushan'. The nameless king with high titles has the same context as the nameless king of the Early Kushan coins struck with the titles of the King of Kings, the Great, the Saviour, which can now be placed after the coinage of Gondophares and the local issues of Kujula, but before the standard uniform coinage of Vima Kadphises.<sup>9</sup> It is clear that the prince of the Takht-i Bahi inscription in Year 103 and the ruler of the Panjtar stone inscription in Year 122 has extended his empire substantially by the time of the Taxila silver-scroll inscription in Year 136 and adopted high-sounding titles. The sequence of events clearly suggests that the three inscriptions refer to the same person, who belongs to the period before the New Era was introduced by Kanishka; and that the nameless king of both the coins and these inscriptions represents the later stages of the rule of Kujula Kadphises after he had captured P'u-ta (Puṣkalāvati) and Chi-pin (Kashmir). Kujula Kadphises is said to have lived for more than eighty years. He played the key role in establishing the Kushan Empire and his coins are very numerous in the finds from the Early Kushan city of Sirkap.

5. Marshall, 1951.

6. Konow, 1929, pp. 57–62.

7. Ibid., pp. 67–70.

8. Ibid., pp. 145–50.

9. MacDowall, 1968*b*, pp. 28–48.



If the credibility of the Khalatse inscription<sup>10</sup> is accepted, identifying Uvima Kavthisa with Vima Kadphises, then the octogenarian father Kujula Kadphises should be assigned a long reign of about fifty years, terminating somewhere between Years 160 and 165 of this era, with a reign of twenty to thirty years for Vima Kadphises, his son. It is now generally accepted that this era of Azes (*Ayasa*) may well have begun at the same time as the Vikrama era of 58 B.C. (see Chapter 8). The dates assigned, then, to Kujula Kadphises would include A.D. 45 (Takht-i Bahi), A.D. 64 (Panjar) and A.D. 78 (Taxila silver scroll), and the dates of Vima Kadphises would include A.D. 127 (Khalatse).

The second series of dated inscriptions includes the Taxila silver vase of Jihonika the satrap dated Year 191.<sup>11</sup> This used to be attributed to the series of dates in the Azes era, but MacDowall<sup>12</sup> has shown that Jihonika's context falls after the reign of Azes II and before Kujula Kadphises in the decade A.D. 30–40, and the date must therefore be attributed to an Indo-Bactrian era.<sup>13</sup> The trilingual inscription at Dasht-i Nawur of Vima Kadphises is dated Year 279.<sup>14</sup> The unfinished inscription from Surkh Kotal of Kanishka is dated Year 279<sup>15</sup> and that of Vima Kadphises is dated Year 299.<sup>16</sup> Both these inscriptions, as the Taxila silver-vase inscription of Jihonika, belong to the same Graeco-Bactrian era, probably the era of Eucratides beginning with his accession around 170 B.C. (see Chapter 17). The dates then assigned to Vima Kadphises would include A.D. 109 (Dasht-i Nawur) and 129 (Surkh Kotal).

Some scholars associate Kanishka with the Saka era of A.D. 78 and consequently have to place Kujula Kadphises and Vima Kadphises before that date. To maintain consistency they have to find earlier reference dates for the two eras. For example, Fussman<sup>17</sup> links Year 279 with a Graeco-Bactrian era of independence from the Seleucids in 247 B.C. to give dates of A.D. 32 and 52 for Vima Kadphises. The problems surrounding Kanishka's dating call for detailed consideration.

## The date of Kanishka

The date of Kanishka does not stand in isolation. In his time the Kushan Empire covered a vast amount of territory from Bactria to Benares and from Kashmir to Sind, and Kushan coins have also been found in recent excavations in Choras-

10. Konow, 1929, pp. 79–81.

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 81–2.

12. MacDowall, 1973, pp. 215–30.

13. Tarn, 1951, pp. 494–502; Bivar, 1963, pp. 489 et seq.

14. Fussman, 1974, pp. 8–22.

15. Bivar, 1963, pp. 498–502.

16. Harmatta, 1965, pp. 164–95.

17. Fussman, 1974.

mia, Khotan and eastern Iran. There is now substantial agreement on most points concerning the relative chronology of the Kushans, but the absolute date of the reference point for the era of Kanishka remains hotly disputed. It is now agreed that it cannot have been the Vikrama era of 58 B.C. which was proposed by Fleet and Kennedy.<sup>18</sup> But the dates advocated still range from A.D. 78 (the Saka era), which is still supported by many Indian scholars, to A.D. 278, once proposed by Bhandarkar<sup>19</sup> and Majumdar<sup>20</sup> and now supported by Zeimal.<sup>21</sup>

The consideration of any of the dates proposed must be fully reconciled with other established historical sequences of which the absolute dating is firmly established, in particular the Guptas and Western Satraps. The establishment of the Imperial Gupta dynasty by Candragupta in A.D. 319, and the intervening kingdoms and republican states that came from the Kushan dynasty and before the Guptas in India – the Nāgas, Yaudheyas, Mālavas, Arjunayanas, Kunindas and Madras – provide a firm *terminus ante quem* for the Kushan dynasty in Indian history. The context of the Western Satrap Rudradāman and his occupation of Sind, Sauvira and Malwa before Saka Year 72 (A.D. 150) in the Junagadh inscription<sup>22</sup> cannot be disputed, nor can his independent status be questioned. He claims in this inscription that he had personally acquired the status of *mahākṣatrapa* through his own prowess and strength.<sup>23</sup> If Kanishka is taken to be the founder of the Saka era of A.D. 78, the dates of his successors Huvishka and Vāsudeva would clash with those of Rudradāman, and it cannot be proved that Rudradāman or his family were ever subordinate to the Kushans.

Another fixed date that must be considered is the dispatch by Po-t'iao, King of the Great Yüeh-chih, of an envoy with tribute to the Wei as a token of his affection, on the day Kuei-mao (26 January) A.D. 230 (*San-kuo-chih*, 'Memoirs of the Three Kingdoms', 3.6a).

Po-t'iao has been identified with Vāsudeva.<sup>24</sup> Advocates of a date in the second century for the era of Kanishka identify him with Vāsudeva I, while those arguing for the A.D. 78 date regard him as a later ruler, Vāsudeva II. Ghirshman<sup>25</sup> dates the era of Kanishka to A.D. 144 because of his excavations at Begram and the evidence of the trilingual inscription of the Sasanian emperor Shapur I at Naqsh-e Rostam. The Begram excavations suggest three chronological stages. The first phase predates Kanishka, yielding coins of Kujula Kadphises and Vima Kadphises along with those of the Indo-Greek and Scytho-Parthian rulers. The second phase contains coins of Kanishka, Huvishka and

18. Vallée Poussin, 1930, pp. 346 et seq.

19. Ibid.

20. Majumdar, 1968, pp. 150 et seq.

21. Zeimal, 1974, pp. 292 et seq.

22. Kielhorn, 1905/06, pp. 36 et seq.

23. Raychaudhuri, 1953, pp. 424 et seq.

24. Zürcher, 1968, p. 371.

25. Ghirshman, 1946.

Vāsudeva, and ends with a major destruction that Ghirshman associates with the conquests of Shapur I. He argues that the conquests of Shapur I provide the terminating point of the second dynasty of the Kushans, and that Shapur's conquest should be placed between his accession in A.D. 241 and his second war against the Romans (A.D. 251–52). The latest coins found in the city of Begram were those of Vāsudeva, the Po-t'iao of the Chinese *San-kuo-chih* and the same person as Vehsadjan, King of the Kushans, mentioned by the Armenian Moses of Khorene. However interpreted, the Sasanian conquest of the western Kushan provinces is a further fixed point which must be considered. Shapur I's inscription on the Ka'be of Zoroaster at Naqsh-e Rostam claims to have incorporated the Kingdom of the Kushans up to Peshawar in the Sasanian Empire.<sup>26</sup> The inscription does not mention the date of the destruction of the Kushans leading to this. In fact, it only records the inclusion of part of the Kushan Empire, which could be the result of a conquest either by Ardashir or by Shapur I and which could have taken place at any time between A.D. 223 and 262. Narain<sup>27</sup> argues that Ghirshman's date for the destruction of Begram II (based on two hypotheses – finds of eight poor coins of Vāsudeva I and Shapur's eastern campaign) stands unproved; he claims the numismatic evidence goes clearly against any classification of the Kushans into three dynasties, and argues for an intermediate date of A.D. 103 for the accession of Kanishka.

Pulleyblank<sup>28</sup> supports Ghirshman's date of A.D. 144 from other evidence. Late Buddhist traditions connect Kanishka with Khotan and there is strong circumstantial evidence for Kushan penetration into the Tarim basin from the use of north-west Indian Prakrit as an administrative language, and from the finds of copper coins of Kanishka at Khotan. Pulleyblank argued that there could not have been any Kushan invasion before A.D. 175. Göbl<sup>29</sup> initially supported this chronology of A.D. 144 with an analysis of Kushan coin types which, he argued, were copied from Roman coins – Vima drawing from Trajan, Kanishka from Hadrian and Huvishka from Antonius Pius. But later Göbl<sup>30</sup> changed his view to A.D. 232 from a linkage he found between the Sasanian gold coinage of Shapur II struck at Merv and the Kushano-Sasanian coinage of Hormizd I at the beginning of the Kushano-Sasanian series. Majumdar<sup>31</sup> drew attention to similarities between Kushan and Early Gupta forms in iconography and palaeography, and connected Kanishka's accession with the beginning of the well-known era of A.D. 248/49. Zeimal<sup>32</sup> went further and suggested A.D. 278. Endorsing Bhandarkar's 1899 suggestion that the beginning of the era should be

26. Maricq, 1958*b*, pp. 295–360.

27. Narain, 1968, pp. 206–39.

28. Pulleyblank, 1968, pp. 247 et seq.

29. Göbl, 1960, pp. 75–91; 1968, pp. 103–13.

30. Göbl, 1984, p. 52, 82.

31. Majumdar, 1968, pp. 150 et seq.

32. Zeimal, 1974, pp. 292–301.

equated with the Saka era of A.D. 78, he regarded Kanishka's era as the third century, from A.D. 278. But any of these late dates placing the Great Kushans (the dynasty of Kanishka) in the third/fourth centuries A.D. would involve a clash not only with the Guptas but also with several other tribes ruling independently between the Later Kushans and the Imperial Guptas.<sup>33</sup>

Many scholars have identified the accession of Kanishka with the Saka era of A.D. 78. Rapson<sup>34</sup> argued that the date on the coins and inscriptions of the Western Satraps of Surashtra and Malwa should start in Kanishka's reign in A.D. 78, but because of its long use by the Saka Western Satraps it became known in India as the Saka era, which effectively disguised its origin and perplexed modern scholars. Tolstov<sup>35</sup> found an era of A.D. 78 used in Chorasmia. Basham<sup>36</sup> also noted that the era of A.D. 78 was used by the Magha kings of Kauśambi and was equated with the Licchavi era used in Nepal; he argued that such wide use of an era was only possible with the patronage of a great power, which could only be the Kushans. But the difficulties in reconciling the presence of Rudradāman (the powerful Western Satrap), who was independent of the Kushans, campaigning against the Yaudheyas, in the lower Indus and Malwa between A.D. 130 and 150, in territory that was part of the fully established Kushan Empire, led Puri<sup>37</sup> to suggest that the era of Kanishka might have started around A.D. 142. A date in the early second century A.D. certainly seems to fit better the evidence of associated Kushan and Roman coin finds<sup>38</sup> and the careful analysis of events under Shapur I by Harmatta,<sup>39</sup> but the issue still remains open, awaiting new evidence and an analytical reconstruction that adequately explains and takes full cognizance of the fixed points of externally dated events.

## The Great Kushans

The chronological framework of the dynasty of the Great Kushans is provided by the series of inscriptions dated in the era of Kanishka. Inscriptions are known of Kanishka dated Years 1–23, of Vasishka dated Years 24 and 28, of Huvishka dated Years 28–60 and of Vāsudeva dated Years 67–98.<sup>40</sup> There is another inscription of Year 41 from Ara of a Kanishka, son of Vajheshka, with the titles '*mahārāja rājatirāja devaputra*' and '*Kaisara*'. Year 41 falls in the

33. Fleet, 1892, pp. 1 et seq.

34. Rapson, 1922, p. 585.

35. Tolstov, 1968, pp. 304–26.

36. Basham, 1968, pp. XII–XIII.

37. Puri, 1965.

38. MacDowall, 1968a, pp. 134–54.

39. Harmatta, 1965, pp. 186 et seq.

40. Puri, 1965, 1977, pp. 101–61; Janert, 1961.

middle of the reign of Huvishka. Smith, Puri and Banerji<sup>41</sup> identified him with the Great Kanishka and suggested that with advancing years and pressure of military affairs in Central Asia, Kanishka had left his son Vasishka as viceroy in India. Vasishka predeceased his father and was replaced by his brother Huvishka. But it could as well be proposed that this Kanishka was another ruler who held the western part of the Kushan Empire in Year 41, perhaps a brother of Huvishka associated with him in power or a member of a collateral branch who usurped power for a time in part of the empire. There are several other possibilities such as the division of the empire between two brothers, Vasishka and Huvishka, on Kanishka's death, with a second Kanishka succeeding his father and finally becoming sole Kushan emperor.<sup>42</sup> But there is another possibility, that both Vasishka and his son Kanishka belong to a separate group of kings after the Great Kushans (Kanishka, Huvishka and Vāsudeva).

There is also a reference to another Kushan ruler, Vaskushana, in an inscription<sup>43</sup> dated Year 22 from Sanchi. He could not have ruled independently in this area when Kanishka was alive. It is, therefore, tempting to identify this Vaskushana with Vasishka. While a king called Vasishka is not known in the coin series of the Great Kushans, a king of this name is known in the coinage of the Later Kushans after Vāsudeva.<sup>44</sup> It can therefore be suggested that Vaskushana, a Kushan *mahārāja* in Year 22 and the Kanishka of the Ara inscription in Year 41, belong to the period after the century of the Great Kushans. These Later Kushan rulers would include both Vasishka and his son Kanishka, and perhaps another Kanishka known from the Mathura inscription of Year 14 which on palaeographic grounds comes closer to the Gupta period.<sup>45</sup> Such a chronological framework can cut the Gordian knot created by the Ara inscription; the Kanishka in the Surkh Kotal inscription dated Year 31<sup>46</sup> seems to be the same Late Kushan ruler.

In the light of these inscriptions, Table 1 sets out a chronological framework of the Early, Great and Later Kushan rulers. The last ruler, Kanishka, may then have been a contemporary of the later Indian dynasties preceding the Early Guptas. There is clearly a second era of the Later Kushans in the inscriptions from Mathura, and evidence for a Later Kushan era starting in A.D. 234 and used on coins of Tekin Shah, King of Udabhāṇḍapura, and the Tochi valley inscriptions. This has led some scholars (Harmatta, Humbach, MacDowall) to place the beginning of the Kanishka era itself in A.D. 134, a century before the commencement of the second Kushan era.

41. Smith, 1924, p. 286; Puri, 1977, pp. 159–60; Banerji, 1908, pp. 58 et seq.

42. Konow, 1929, p. 163.

43. Marshall and Foucher, 1947, Vol. I, p. 386; Lohuizen-de Leeuw, 1949, p. 314.

44. Göbl, 1984, pp. 58–78.

45. Puri, 1965, pp. 70 et seq.

46. Maricq, 1958a, pp. 345 et seq.

TABLE 1. Chronological framework of rulers

Rulers	Era dates			
	Graeco-Bactrian	Azes	Kanishka	Later Kushans
<i>Sakas</i>				
Jihonika the satrap	191			
<i>Early Kushans</i>				
Kujula Kadphises		103		
Nameless king		122 and 136		
Vima Kadphises	279 <sup>1</sup>	184 (7)		
<i>Great Kushans</i>				
Kanishka			1-23	
Huvishka			28-60	
Vāsudeva			67-99	
<i>Later Kushans</i>				
Kanishka II				14
Vasishka				20, 22, 24, 28
Kanishka III				31, 41

1. The date is read as 285 by Marien and 299 by Harmatta.

## Relations with Iran

Kujula Kadphises is mentioned as a prince (*erjhuna Kapa*) at the court of the Indo-Parthian king Gondophares in the Takht-i Bahi inscription of Year 103 (A.D. 45). According to the *Hou Han-shu*, Kujula is said to have attacked Anhsi (Parthia) and taken the territory of Kao-fu (Kabul). It is difficult to explain the presence of a Kushan prince at the Indo-Parthian court in Taxila, but it is clear that eventually Kujula Kadphises reconquered the province of Kāpiśa and Kabul from the Indo-Parthians and then captured the Indus provinces of the Indo-Parthians, including Taxila, from the successors of Gondophares.<sup>47</sup> Vima Kadphises (Fig. 1) seems to have profited from the weakness of the Indo-Parthians to seize all the Indus valley up to Sind. At the height of their power under Kanishka, the Kushans did not seem to be interested in territorial gains at the expense of their neighbours, the Parthians. Buddhist tradition refers to a war by Kanishka against the Parthians and according to Ghirshman<sup>48</sup> it might have taken place in the reign of Vologases III, probably occasioned by a

47. Banerjea, 1957.

48. Ghirshman, 1978, p. 262.

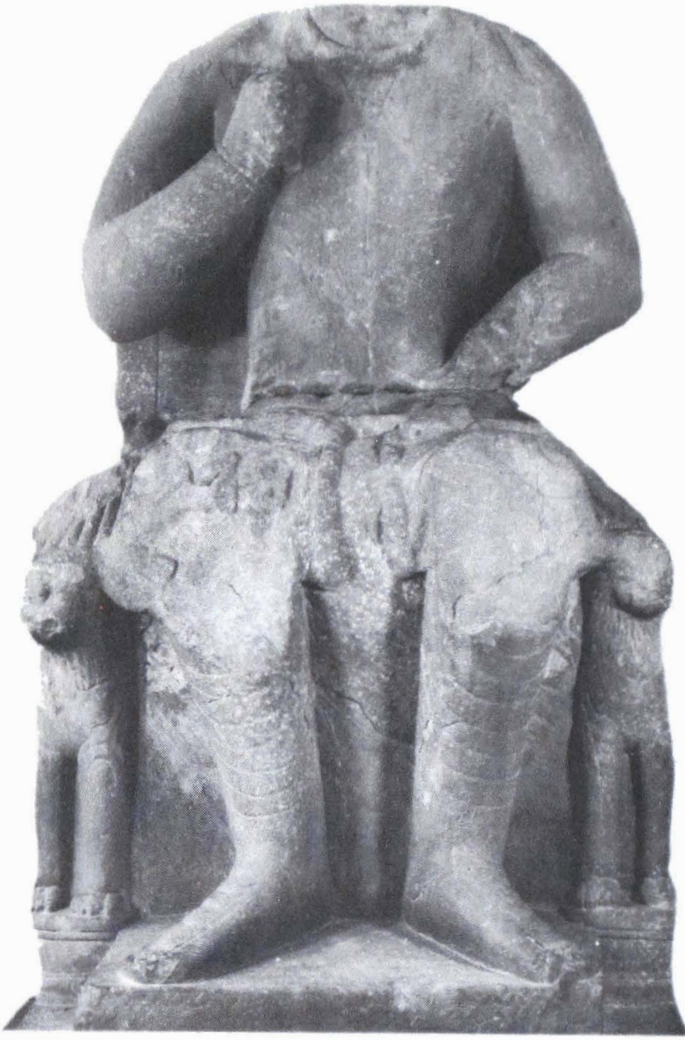


FIG. 1. Statue of Vima Kadphises sitting on a lion throne. Mathura.

Parthian attempt to recover some of the Iranian provinces captured by the Kushans from the Indo-Parthians.

The ascendancy of the Kushans posed a continuing threat to Parthia's eastern boundary. Eventually the founder of the Sasanian dynasty, Ardashir, attacked the Kushans and conquered Margiana, Carmania and Sistan.<sup>49</sup> Tabari says that the kings of the Kushans, of Turan and of Makran submitted without battle to Ardashir and kept their territories as vassals.<sup>50</sup> Ardashir's successor, Shapur I, claims among his provinces Sind and the country of the Kushans up to Peshawar in his inscription in the Ka'be of Zoroaster.<sup>51</sup> The Kushan dynasty of Kanishka was deposed and replaced in the north by another line of Kushano-

49. Ghirshman, 1946, pp. 100 et seq.; Narain, 1968, pp. 211-12.

50. Maricq, 1968, pp. 182-4.

51. Maricq, 1958*b*, pp. 295-360.

Sasanian princes ruling a considerably reduced kingdom, and recognizing the suzerainty of the Sasanians, at least for a time. There was a serious revolt in the eastern Sasanian provinces in the time of Bahram II (A.D. 276–93), when the king's brother, who was viceroy in Sistan, attempted to seize the throne, and the Kushan king supported him. Peace was restored with the marriage of Hormizd II, son and successor of Narseh (A.D. 303–09), to a Kushan princess.<sup>52</sup> The death of Hormizd II left a minor, Shapur II, on the Sasanian throne. The Kushans took advantage of this, and the internal disorders in Iran, to recover the lost territory, but Shapur II, on attaining his majority, waged a new war against the Kushans and decisively defeated them.

## Relations with China

The *Hou Han-shu* provides information only about the Kadphises rulers and refers to the failure of a Kushan army sent against the Chinese general Pan Ch'ao. The Chinese general's successful policy in Central Asia coincided with the Kushan conquest of northern India and led to a conflict of interest with the political aspirations of Vima Kadphises (see Chapter 10).

Rivalry between the Kushans and the Chinese in Central Asia seems to have continued up to the time of Vāsudeva. The Chinese work, the *San-kuo-chih*, compiled by Ch'en Shou (A.D. 233–97), records that the King of the Great Yüeh-chih, Po-t'iao, sent an envoy with tribute to China and was given the honorary title of 'King of the Yüeh-chih who shows affection towards the Wei'. Po-t'iao has been identified with Vāsudeva, either Vāsudeva I or Vāsudeva II, depending on the chronology favoured by the scholar concerned.

## Relations with Rome

According to Dio Cassius<sup>53</sup> many embassies came to Augustus, and the Indians, having previously proclaimed a treaty of alliance, concluded it with the presentation of gifts including tigers, animals that the Romans saw for the first time. Florus, writing in the time of Trajan (A.D. 98–117),<sup>54</sup> refers to the arrival in Rome of several embassies, especially from the Indians. Political relations, seen in the dispatch of embassies, seem to be connected with trade contacts and commercial transactions related to the silk trade. Some of the copper coins of Kujula Kadphises have an obverse head closely copied from the portraits on the Julio-Claudian silver denarii of Augustus and Tiberius, and show the Kushan empe-

52. Ghirshman, 1978, p. 296.

53. McCrindle, 1901, p. 212.

54. Ibid., p. 213.





FIG. 2. Statue of Kanishka I. Mathura.

ror sitting on a curule chair which appears on the reverse of Roman coins of Claudius and may well represent a gift from a Roman emperor. Roman aurei and denarii were used extensively in Roman sea trade with India, which traded in silk and spices. Pliny (*Natural History* XII.10.41) refers to the serious drain of Roman coins exported to India. The gold coinage introduced by Vima Kadphises used a gold dinar that copied the weight standard of the Roman gold aureus,<sup>55</sup> and the impact of Graeco-Roman art in Gandhāra sheds light on the cultural and commercial relations between the Kushan Empire and the Roman world.

## Relations with north-eastern India

The extension of the Kushan Empire in northern India seems to have been the achievement of Kanishka (Fig. 2), whose inscriptions are found at Mathura, Kauśāmbi and Sarnath. The distribution of copper Kushan coins of Kanishka and Huvishka extends as far as Patna and Gaya in eastern India.<sup>56</sup> The *Rājataranginī* and the *Hou Han-shu* show Kanishka's hold over Kashmir and parts of central and south-western India.<sup>57</sup> The reference in the *Śrīdharmapīṭakanidānasūtra* to the defeat of the King of Pāṭaliputra, when Kanishka demanded a large indemnity but agreed to accept Aśvaghoṣa, the Buddha's alms bowl and a compassionate cock, confirms Kushan activities in north-east India.

After Huvishka, the Kushans lost some more distant territories in eastern India, but Mathura long remained under Kushan rule. The long series of inscriptions found there continues up to Year 57 of the second Kushan era under the Later Kushans,<sup>58</sup> and it has been thought that Mathura was a second capital of the Kushans for the eastern region (Fig. 3). The appointment of satraps for Mathura, as at Sarnath, points to a determined control over the region. Huvishka's reign was a period of political security and economic prosperity. The extensive range of gold coins of Huvishka, retaining a good weight standard and high gold purity, suggests economic stability closely associated with political stability. Vāsudeva's long rule of more than thirty years was equally characterized by political stability at home. After Vāsudeva, the Kushans lost more territory to a series of new dynasties and republican states.

55. Sewell, 1904, p. 591; MacDowall, 1960, pp. 63 et seq.

56. Majumdar, 1932, pp. 127 et seq.; Banerji, 1951, pp. 107 et seq.; Gupta, 1953, pp. 185 et seq.

57. Thomas, 1935.

58. Rosenfield, 1967, pp. 270–3.





FIG. 3. Statue of sitting Buddha from the Kushan age. Mathura.

## Relations with the Saka satraps

It has been suggested by some scholars<sup>59</sup> that the Kushans had a radical affinity with the Sakas and were a Saka clan. The term 'Saka' has been used in a very imprecise way, and it is possible that the Kushans may have been the descendants of some of the Sakas mentioned by Herodotus. According to the *Kālakā-caryakathānaka*,<sup>60</sup> the Sakas of the Indus conquered Surashtra and Malwa shortly before the beginning of the Vikrama era (57 B.C.), but were ousted by Vikramāditya. After a lapse of 135 years (c. A.D. 78) a new Saka came and re-established the Saka dominion there. It has been suggested that the second conquest was associated with Vima Kadphises and his satraps ruled as the Saka satraps of western India, without any regal appellation like *mahārāja*. But they also used the title of *mahākṣatrapa*, which could mean either the attainment of independence or promotion in the administrative hierarchy. The expression '*svayamadhigata mahākṣatrapa nāmah*' in the Junagadh inscription<sup>61</sup> of Rudradāman is especially significant. While there is no specific evidence that the Saka satraps of western India ever owed allegiance to Vima Kadphises, circumstantial evidence, as also that adduced by the *Hou Han-shu*, suggests his conquest of Sind or the Indus region and his association with the Saka satraps who used the Saka era, probably founded by their overlord, in their records.

The Kushans held the lower Indus valley. An inscription of Kanishka Year 11 was found at Sui Vihar near Bahawalpur, and there have been finds of Later Kushan coins from the stupa site at Mohenjo-daro<sup>62</sup> and at Jhukar, about 30 km to the north.<sup>63</sup> The find of potsherds with Kharoṣṭhī lettering at Tor Dheri in the Loralai District of Baluchistan<sup>64</sup> may suggest an expansion of Kushan power in that region. But Kushan rule in Sind and Sauvira (modern Multan) seems to conflict with the claims of the Western Satrap Rudradāman, recorded in his Junagadh inscription of A.D. 150. This could be reconciled if we presume that he was a satrap of Kanishka, for which there is no evidence, or that he preceded Kanishka, which seems more probable (see discussion on the date of Kanishka above).

## The Kushan political system

The divinity of kingship seems to have been the most conspicuous element in the Kushan political system. Their kings were not only accorded the title of

59. Maenchen-Helfen, 1945, pp. 71 et seq.

60. Jacobi, 1880, pp. 247 et seq.; Konow, 1929, pp. xxvi-xxviii.

61. *Epigraphica Indica*, p. 82.

62. Marshall, 1932, p. 127.

63. Majumdar, 1934, p. 7.

64. Konow, 1929, pp. 173-7.

'*devaputra*'<sup>65</sup> (Son of God), corresponding to the Chinese imperial title '*t'ien-tzū*' (Son of Heaven), but were deified after death and their statues were set up in a *devakula* (god house). Such statues of Kushan rulers have been recovered from excavations at Mat, near Mathura, and from Surkh Kotal in Afghanistan. It is probable that the statue of the deified Huvishka was erected in the lifetime of the ruler.<sup>66</sup> The Kushan rulers were secularist in one sense, in that they depicted divinities from different pantheons on their coins, but religion and polity were interlinked. The Mat inscription of Huvishka<sup>67</sup> refers to him as 'steadfast in the true law', a title also borne by the first Kushan king, Kujula Kadphises, on his coins. It is further recorded that on account of his devotion, the kingdom was conferred on the grandfather of Huvishka by Sarva (which is another name for the god Śiva) and Candavira (a name connected with the moon).

The Kushan kings assumed high-sounding titles<sup>68</sup> borrowed, like the divinities on their coins, from different regions and civilizations. They use the Indian titulature '*mahārāja rājatirāja*' (Great King, the King of Kings), its Iranian counterpart '*šaonano šao*' and its Greek counterpart '*Basileus Basileon*' (Fig. 4). These titles, no doubt, indicate Kushan paramountcy over areas where lesser princes and feudal lords retained local power. In the Ara inscription, the Later Kanishka also has the title '*Kaisara*', the equivalent of 'Caesar' used by Roman emperors, suggesting Kushan contact with Rome and a claim to comparable status. Some titles were borrowed from their Bactrian, Saka and Indo-Parthian predecessors. It has been suggested that they also inherited a system of joint rule, but there is no numismatic evidence for this. No Kushan coin portrays two rulers. The argument for supposed joint rule is based on inscriptions that seem to show kings with overlapping dates: an inscription of '*Vaṣkuṣāna*' (identified with Vasishka) from Sanchi with the title '*rāja*' dated Year 22 when Kanishka was king and the Ara inscription dated Year 41 when Huvishka was king. But both these inscriptions are dated in the Later Kushan era. There is consequently no overlapping, and the dual kingship known in the Indo-Parthian political system does not seem to have been practised under the Kushans.<sup>69</sup>

## Kushan administration

The vast Kushan Empire, extending from Central Asia to Bihar and from Kashmir to Sind, containing peoples of different nationalities and religions with a

65. Thomas, 1935, pp. 97 et seq.; Sharma, 1959, p. 177.

66. Janert, 1961, p. 145.

67. Ibid., p. 144.

68. Puri, 1939/40, pp. 433–41.

69. Puri, 1965, pp. 79–87.





FIG. 4. Coin of Kanishka I with Greek legend and the title '*Basileus Basileon*'.

heterogeneous socio-economic background, was governed through an organized administrative system, probably in three tiers, at central, provincial and local levels. The king seems to have possessed unfettered powers, as we find no reference in the Kushan records to any advisory body or to councillors corresponding to *amātyas* and *sachivas* of the Mauryan period. The Kushans seem to have followed the earlier existing pattern of the Indo-Greeks and Parthians by appointing *kṣatrapas* and *mahākṣatrapas* for different units of the empire. Inscriptions provide the names of some such *kṣatrapas*, some foreign, like Vanaspara, and the *mahākṣatrapa* Kharapallāna at Varanasi, Naṃda at Mathura, Veśpasi and Lala, a scion of the Kushan family, Liaka, and an unknown satrap, son of the satrap Graṇavhryaka at Kāpiśa (Begram). Some inscriptions show that certain appointments were hereditary.

They mention other officials performing both civil and military functions, called '*daṇḍanāyaka*' and '*mahādaṇḍanāyaka*'. The two terms are found in

numerous inscriptions throughout India, suggesting the prevalence of this feudal element – as one might presume – in the administrative set-up of different ruling families over a considerable period of time. They were charged with administrative and military responsibilities in different areas. The *daṇḍanāyaka* was presumably the wielder of the rod (*daṇḍa*), acting both as commissioner of police to prevent crime and as a judge or criminal magistrate administering justice. He could also perform military functions although he is distinguished from the *senānī*, or real commander. He is also differentiated from the *daṇḍapāsika* of the later records which probably signifies someone carrying fetters (*pāśa*).

The places where inscriptions mentioning satraps and other officials have been found indicate localities for which they were responsible. Satraps are known for Kāpiśa (Begram), Manikyala (near Rawalpindi), Und (west of the Indus), Mathura, Varanasi, etc. There may have been satraps for other parts of the empire, but the evidence on this point is wanting. The relations between *kṣatrapas* and *daṇḍanāyakas* are no longer defined, but it may be assumed that *kṣatrapas* were definitely at a higher administrative level than the *daṇḍanāyakas*. The use of foreigners alone at the higher level of political organization ensured efficiency and minimized the chances of internal dissension and disorder, but this principle was not applied at local village level. The inscriptions mention two terms – ‘*grāmika*’ and ‘*padrapāla*’ – both signifying ‘village headman’, who collected the king’s dues and took cognizance of crimes in his area. There is no information about the local government that we find later in the Gupta period.

The scanty information available suggests that the Kushan rulers accepted the prevalent Indian and Chinese concept of the divinity of kingship, and borrowed the Achaemenid and subsequently Indo-Greek and Indo-Parthian system of appointing satraps as provincial governors, while the feudal lord (*daṇḍanāyaka*) was their own creation. The title is no doubt Indian, but all feudal lords known to have been associated with the Kushan administration were foreigners.





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## ECONOMY AND SOCIAL SYSTEM IN CENTRAL ASIA IN THE KUSHAN AGE\*

*A. R. Mukhamedjanov*

**D**URING the period of the Kushan Empire, great progress was made in the social and economic life of the peoples of Central Asia. The economic prosperity they enjoyed was due to a number of factors: (a) the unification of the greater part of Central Asia's ancient agricultural regions under the authority of a single empire; (b) the maintenance of political stability over long periods; (c) the rapid development of farming (with crop irrigation) and handicrafts; and (d) the expansion and strengthening of trade relations with India, China and the countries of the Near East. With the expansion of internal and international trade, and the development of economic relations in Central Asia, agriculture, which had already played a major role in the country's economic development, acquired even greater importance. In countries with inadequate rainfall, agriculture, the backbone of ancient civilizations, has always depended on artificial irrigation and many aspects of the social and economic life of the peoples of Central Asia in the Kushan period are closely linked with irrigation as an element in agricultural production and general prosperity.

### Irrigation

Archaeological evidence reveals intensive exploitation of new agricultural land and the expansion of agricultural oases at the beginning of the Christian era in the river valleys and ancient agricultural oasis areas of Central Asia, especially in the southern regions, even though the best and most suitable croplands were by that time already under cultivation. It has also been established that, with the opening up of new regions and the extension of crop-farming to the northern provinces of Central Asia on the lower reaches of the Zerafshan, on the middle

\* See Maps 4, 5 and 6.

reaches of the Syr Darya and in the Tashkent oasis, large numbers of nomadic livestock-breeders switched to a settled way of life and new centres of urban civilization were formed. As a result of the extensive development of irrigation networks, practically all the main provinces of Central Asia were brought under cultivation during this period and the establishment of the major crop-growing oases was completed. The extent to which northern Bactria was populated and brought under cultivation at this time can be judged from the 117 archaeological monuments of the Kushan period recorded in recent years in the territory of Surkhan Darya province.<sup>1</sup> A major channel, the Zang canal, leading from the Surkhan river, was constructed. In the zone irrigated by it a new oasis, the Angor, was established around the town of Zar-tepe.<sup>2</sup> The founding of Dalverzin-tepe as a major urban centre also dates back to this period. The Surkhan Darya and Sherabad Darya valleys, with their flourishing agricultural oases, fortified towns and extensive grazing lands, were able to provide a strong base for unifying the domains of the Yüeh-chih on the right bank of the Amu Darya. When they were unified by the ruler of Kuei-shuang, who subjugated the four other Yüeh-chih principalities, the nucleus of the Kushan Empire was formed.

This was the time when large-scale irrigation systems were developed in the Zerafshan and Kashka Darya valleys and the Tashkent oasis. The major irrigation works constructed in the Samarkand oasis and which carried water from the Zerafshan river were the Bulungur and Payarîk canals on the right bank, the Dargom and Narpai canals on the left bank, and the Ishtîkhan and Naukinsk systems in the Miyan-kala territory. Some of these extended over a distance of more than 100 km. In the Bukharan part of the Zerafshan valley, the river fed the Kanimekh (Kanimug), Kharkan Rud, Zandana and Ramitan Rud canals on the right bank, and the main canal, the Shah Rud (Rud-i Zar) and many others on the left bank.<sup>3</sup> As a result of the development of irrigation in the Zerafshan river valley, a vast area was supplied with water and brought under cultivation. According to our calculations, some 3,400–3,500 km<sup>2</sup> of land along the lower reaches of the Zerafshan alone were irrigated in the period from the first to the fourth century A.D. The western boundary of these ancient irrigated lands, which today passes through the sands of Kyzyl Kum, was then at certain points situated some tens of kilometres beyond the present-day limits of the Bukhara oasis.<sup>4</sup> Thus, during the Kushan period, practically the entire flood-plain of the Zerafshan valley was brought under cultivation, and the two large agricultural oases of Samarkand and Bukhara were established.

During the same period, a number of major irrigation systems – the Rudaksa Kasan, Faizabad, Nasaf-Denau, Kamashi and many other canals –

1. Rtveladze and Pidaev, 1981.

2. Masson, 1981.

3. Mukhamedjanov, 1978.

4. Ibid.

were built along lower reaches of the Kashka Darya river. Many fortifications, settlements and farmsteads of the Late Kushan period were constructed in the vicinity of these canals, especially in the third and fourth centuries A.D. The establishment of ancient Nakhshab oasis and its centre, the town of Er-kurgan, was completed.<sup>5</sup> The oasis covered some 1,500–1,600 km<sup>2</sup>.

The construction of the Salar-Karasu-Dzhun irrigation system in the second and first centuries B.C. gave impetus to the development of the agricultural oasis of ancient Tashkent. The origin of crop-raising on the territory of the Chirchik-Ahangaran basin dates back to an earlier period. However, as the Buzgon-tepe, Taukat-tepe, Kugait, Shash-tepe and other archaeological monuments located in the irrigation zone of the Salar-Karasu-Dzhun system show, the intensive application of irrigation in that region and the urbanization of a part of its settled area began at the dawn of the Christian era.<sup>6</sup> One characteristic feature of the establishment of the Tashkent agricultural oasis is the fact that all the lands comprised in it were not brought under cultivation at the same time. Priority was given to the use of water resources for irrigation areas which were most favoured by natural conditions and were, for the most part, situated in regions adjacent to the water supply.

Traces of irrigation systems of the Kushan period are found in the upper Zerafshan, Kafirnigan and Vakhsh river valleys in Tajikistan. The northern and western sectors of the Vakhsh valley were watered by the ancient Dzhuibar canal, which was built in the second and third centuries A.D. Remains of this canal, in the form of embankments 18 m wide and up to 2.5 m high, have survived in the region of Urtaboz, extending over a distance of 12 km.<sup>7</sup>

In the Kushan period, in the Ferghana valley, prior to the building of the main canals leading off the Syr Darya, one of the two great rivers of Central Asia, a complex of fan-shaped irrigation systems providing water for individual agricultural oases was established at the base of the Isfara, Sokh, Shahimardan (Margelan), Isfayram, Aravan and other mountain river gorges. At the head of each system there was usually a large fortress, which provided a vantage point from which the distribution of water could be strictly regulated. For example, the Sari-kurgan fortress stood at the head of the Sokh river system. Archaeological material indicates that the formation of complex multi-branch irrigation systems, the rapid expansion of irrigated areas and the emergence of a large number of fortified settlements in the Ferghana valley all took place in the first centuries A.D.<sup>8</sup>

The development of irrigation and the expansion of irrigated areas in Central Asia during the Kushan period have been thoroughly investigated along

5. Kabanov, 1977, 1981.

6. Buryakov and Filanovich, 1972.

7. Zeimal, 1971.

8. Gulyamov, 1974.

the lower reaches of the Amu Darya and Syr Darya where irrigation was practised in ancient times. During this period, entire networks of canals were built and brought into operation in Chorasmia. For example, major canals such as the Gaukhora, Toprak-kala (right-bank Chorasmia), Khaikhanik, Vadak and Buva canals, the left-bank canal originating in Daudan (left-bank Chorasmia) and many others were all built during this period. It was a time of considerable growth in the oases of the Bazar-kala and Guldursun canals, which were built as early as the fourth and third centuries B.C. A large branch canal which was built off the Toprak-kala canal irrigated the Sultan-Uizdag foothills. The fortress of Ayaz-kala was erected on the edge of the newly cultivated lands. Following the reinforcement of the Gaziabad-Chermeniyab irrigation system, the Kandum-kala and Kardarankhas fortresses were restored and new fortresses and towns built. These included the Zamakhshar (Izmukshir) fortress, Khiva, the Devkeskan fortress on Chink of the Ustyurt and many others.<sup>9</sup>

The discovery and detailed study of the remains of ancient irrigation systems along the lower reaches of the Amu Darya have shown that in the Kushan period Chorasmia had the most highly developed of all the ancient irrigation systems (Fig. 1). Progress in irrigation engineering took the form of improvements in the systems of water supply, and made changes in the section of the main canals. The archaic broad (20–40 m wide) and shallow canals were replaced during the period by narrower canals with deeper sections. At the same time the canals were considerably lengthened, and extended by many kilometres. The number of smaller local systems was reduced and these were amalgamated with much larger irrigation systems, shifting the main water intake further upstream. The process of carrying water to the fields was improved and various water distribution devices were introduced. Irrigation was effected in accordance with a specific flow pattern: main river, head, main canal, distribution canal, irrigation canal and fields. The total length of one of the largest canals of the period, known as the ancient Kîrkkîz canal (right-bank Chorasmia), was 90 km. It watered numerous fields for cultivation purposes. The surviving portions of a canal of the K'ang-chü period (fourth century B.C. to first century A.D.) measure as much as 20 m from bank to bank; those dating from the Kushan period (second and third centuries A.D.) measure only 10–11 m, but have steep sides and are much deeper. The creation and maintenance of major irrigation systems of this kind obviously called for extensive earth-moving operations, the installation of sophisticated structures at the head of the system and constant dredging to prevent silting up. It has been calculated that over 222 million m<sup>3</sup> of earth were removed in digging the Kîrkkîz canal, a task which took 15,000 labourers two months to complete. Some 6,000–7,000 labourers were used annually to keep the canal clear of silt and maintain it in working

9. Gulyamov, 1957.

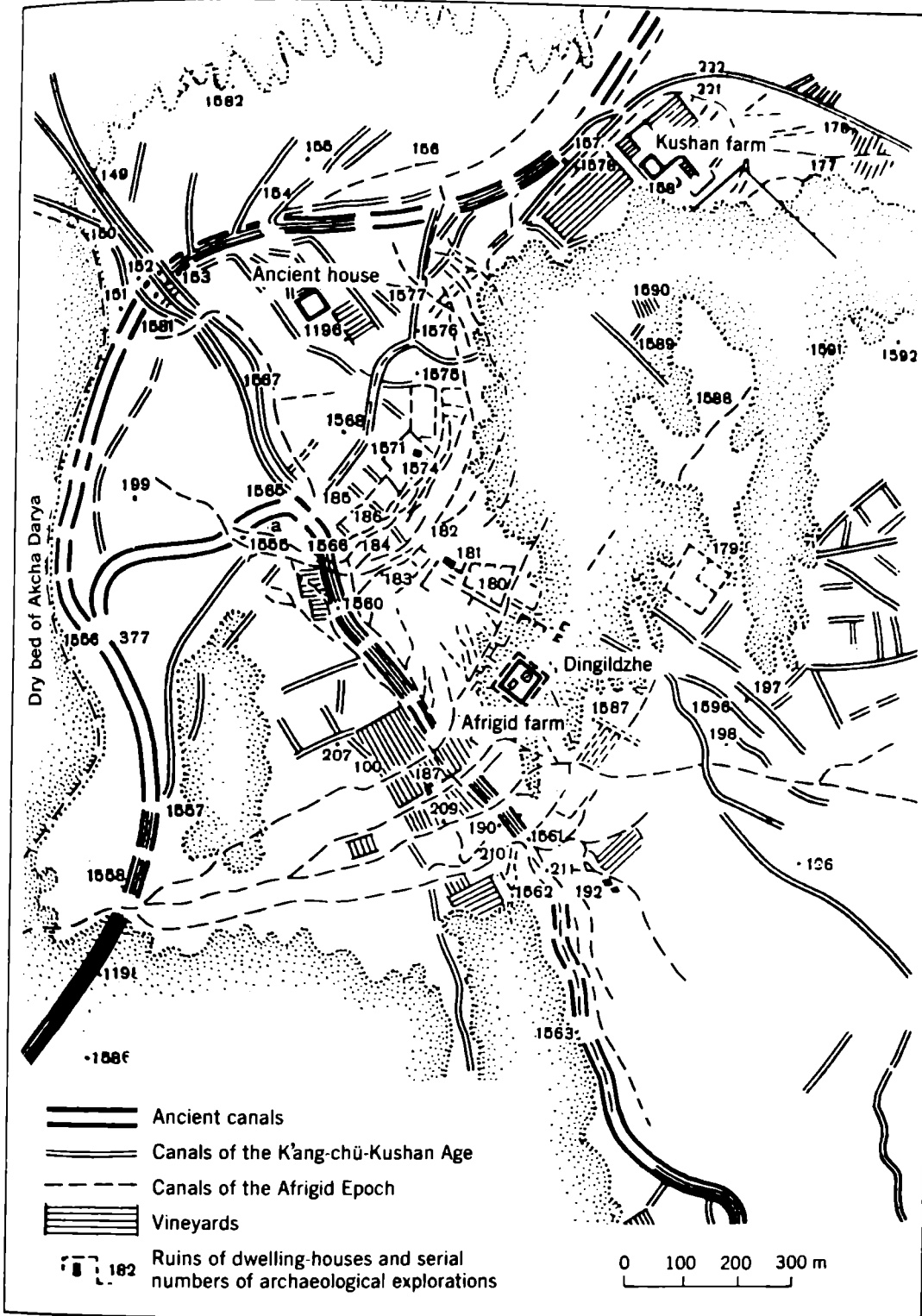


FIG. 1. Irrigation system of ancient Chorasmia. Canals in the environs of Dirgildzhe.  
(Courtesy of B. V. Andrianov.)

condition.<sup>10</sup> Deep central canals extending over long distances proved more helpful than the broad and shallow canals of ancient times. S. P. Tolstov, in his observations on the ancient irrigation works of Chorasmia, concluded that by late antiquity they had been completely rebuilt. The archaic and classical irrigation systems of the K'ang-chü period were in many respects superior to those that were fully developed in the Middle Ages.<sup>11</sup>

In the K'ang-chü-Kushan period, when irrigation systems reached their highest level of development, the area under irrigation along the lower reaches of the Amu Darya and Syr Darya totalled 35,000-38,000 km<sup>2</sup> (13,000 km<sup>2</sup> on the lower Amu Darya and 22,000-25,000 km<sup>2</sup> on the lower Syr Darya).<sup>12</sup> Thus, in antiquity, the land area under irrigation along the lower reaches of the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya was four times greater than it is today. It must, however, be remembered that the land was not then as intensively irrigated as it is today. Although the main canals were of considerable size and length, the network of subsidiary irrigation canals was relatively small and, as a result, not more than 10-15 per cent of the land area, the irrigation zone, was directly used for crop-raising, in spite of the substantial supply of water.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to the extensive development that occurred in the alluvial zones of the major river valleys, the foothills and mountain regions of Central Asia were also brought under cultivation during the Kushan period, as a result of improvements in irrigation engineering and the accumulation of experience in irrigation. Since the water flow in the gorges of these regions was not abundant and the possibility of expanding the total area of irrigated land was limited, both groundwater and water from springs, which in those days were far more numerous, were used for irrigation in addition to the spring-thaw water from mountain streams. Depending on the hydrographic and geomorphologic features of each river valley and mountain region, different types of hydraulic works were developed. To store the limited water from mountain gorges and springs, small covered reservoirs were built inside a ravine or at the point where the gorge opened out from it. The techniques used for constructing these miniature reservoirs were very simple. The structures were either rectangular or oval in appearance, closely resembling the pens used for small livestock. Their sides were built of boulders packed with turf and they were located on the slopes of terraces above the flood-plain. They measured 50 × 40 m at most; the walls were up to 2 m high and 1-2 m wide. A reservoir usually had small openings in opposite walls. The upper opening was the intake and the lower one was the outlet for releasing the water into the irrigation network. The use of storage reservoirs for irrigation was typical of terraced agriculture, and in the Kushan period it

10. Andrianov, 1969.

11. Tolstov, 1962.

12. Ibid.

13. Tolstov, 1969.

was common practice in the upper Zerafshan valley and in the foothills of the Nuratau mountains. Along the northern slope of the Nuratau, at the points where streams emerge from their mountain gorges, fortified rural settlements have been identified and recorded, and around them remains of small ancient reservoirs with traces of terraced farming have been found. Archaeological evidence shows that small reservoirs with an average capacity of 1,000–1,200 m<sup>3</sup> of water, and terraced farming using those reservoirs, were introduced in the mountain regions of Central Asia during the first centuries of the Christian era.<sup>14</sup>

In mountain valleys where there were no sources of surface water, groundwater was widely used for irrigation. It was collected for this purpose in *kahrez*, or underground reservoirs, consisting of horizontal water-bearing galleries (which required a great deal of manpower to bore) and a large number of vertical ventilation shafts. The remains of a number of abandoned ancient *kahrez* have been identified and studied in the region of Kopet Dag and Babadug, in the Vakhsh river valley and along the upper Zerafshan. Archaeological investigations have shown that underground irrigation reservoirs of this kind made it possible to bring under cultivation a large area of land in the foothills of the Nuratau region, and a small agricultural oasis was established at the edge of the Kyzyl Kum Desert. In this period the whole of the upper Zerafshan valley, as far as present-day Matcha, was converted to agricultural use.<sup>15</sup>

In rugged mountain terrain, it was especially difficult to select a site for the head of a canal to be fed by a mountain river flowing down a deep gorge, and to build a canal over land that was extensively broken by ravines. The major achievements of Kushan irrigation engineering included the boring of tunnel-like water-intake channels at the heads of main canals that emerged from the sheer rock sides of a mountain river, and the construction of aqueducts across ravines or gaps in mountain ridges. Remains of ancient engineering works of this kind have been identified along the upper Zerafshan, particularly in the locality of Ravatkhadzha, at the head of the Dargom canal, which was built outwards from the Zerafshan at the beginning of our era. In the Early Middle Ages this locality was known as Vargsar, meaning 'head of a dam'. Sogdian irrigation engineers chose this locality for the head of the Dargom canal for two reasons. In the first place, the Zerafshan river narrows here and is not more than 200 m wide, whereas upstream and downstream it is much wider – in some places even 2 km wide. Secondly, the river here has very hard banks and the left bank is a mass of conglomerate rising 15 m. It was of course impossible to build the opening section of the Dargom canal through the high solid banks of the Zerafshan, and so the ancient irrigation engineers chose instead to bore a tunnel with a number of water-intake openings and wells. One of the tunnel openings measuring 1.5 m in diameter still survives at a point slightly above the present-day

14. Mukhamedjanov, 1975.

15. Staviskiy, 1961.

Pervomaisky hydro-electric power station. The ancient tunnel section of the Dargom canal probably ran almost parallel to the bank. At a later period this section was eroded by the water passing through it and the ancient water-intake of the canal merged with the water-meadow of the Zerafshan river.<sup>16</sup> At this time also a small settlement was built in the locality of Vargsar, and it was probably here that the ancient superintendents of the headworks of the Dargom canal used to live. According to written sources, in the Early Middle Ages the inhabitants of Vargsar were required to keep watch on the Dargom canal dam as a labour duty, in exchange for which they were exempted from land taxes.<sup>17</sup> At that time, about 40,000 people lived in Vargsar,<sup>18</sup> which was always of major strategic importance as the main water-supply centre for the left-bank sector of the Samarkand oasis and as a point commanding the approaches to Samarkand. Whoever held Vargsar could deprive Samarkand of its water supply. In the political history of Samarkand, there are numerous examples of attempts by foreign invaders to destroy the Vargsar dam and so compel Samarkand to surrender. The rulers of ancient Sogdiana therefore did all they could to strengthen its defensive capacity, and always maintained large numbers of troops there. According to Nasafi, in the Early Middle Ages, Vargsar was defended by an army of 4,000 men and by 12,000 *ghazi* or warriors.<sup>19</sup> Samarkand's municipal canal was known as 'Juy-i arziz' (lead canal), since the bottom of the aqueduct was lined with lead. Judging from the size of the bricks<sup>20</sup> discovered south of Afrasiab near the Khasret-Khîzr mosque, the aqueduct was an arched structure about 3.8–4 m wide. The site where it was located in the Middle Ages was known as 'Rasat-tok' or 'Sari-tok' (i.e. head of the arch). In ancient times, the Samarkand authorities attached particular importance to this structure. Revenue from land along the banks of the Juy-i arziz, in the locality of Sari-tok, was earmarked for the maintenance of the aqueduct and its bridge; and the Samarkand *magi* (fire-worshippers) were required, as a labour duty, to keep the structure in good repair and to guard it the whole year round.<sup>21</sup>

The development of various types of water engineering works was undoubtedly attributable to the very wide practical experience of irrigation accumulated over many centuries, to the enormous expenditure of labour and to the application of special water engineering techniques by ancient irrigation engineers. Tolstov, in his study of the remains of the ancient irrigation works in Chorasmia, noted that it was precisely during the period of antiquity that a school of irrigation engineers and high priests of science emerged at Chorasmia;

16. Mukhamedjanov, 1972.

17. Bartol'd, 1965, Vol. 3.

18. Nasafi, n.d.

19. Ibid.

20. The wedge-shaped bricks measured  $48.5 \times 59 - 26 \times 8.5$  cm; the rectangular bricks  $53 \times 40 \times 9$  cm; and the square bricks  $42 \times 42 \times 9$  cm.

21. *Istoriya Samarkanda*, 1969.



it remained in existence until the time of Qutayba's campaign against Khwārizm (ancient Chorasnia). The school included experts in mathematics, water engineering, cartography, astronomy and calendrical observations, which were of great importance for an extensive irrigation economy.<sup>22</sup> The brunt of the task of building irrigation works was, however, borne by the peasants, and many irrigation systems were dug by labourers from the rural communities, without any particular expenditure of effort or contribution by the authorities.

Thus, during the Kushan period, as farming developed and large areas of land were brought under cultivation, an extensive irrigation economy was created in the river valleys and agricultural oases of Central Asia, and this played a major role in the socio-economic and cultural life of the ancient population of the country.

## Crop-raising and livestock-breeding

Agriculture attained a high level of development during the Kushan period. Its growth was primarily due to the rapid expansion of irrigation and to the fact that more land was supplied with water and brought under cultivation than at any other time in the ancient history of Central Asia. In the oases crops were grown on irrigated land, while in the foothills and mountain regions dry-land farming was widespread. Also, in the natural wetlands along the river banks, particularly on the lower reaches of the Amu Darya, certain crops were grown on semi-irrigated land.<sup>23</sup> The expansion of farming was, in turn, accompanied by the development of agricultural equipment and improvements in methods of cultivation. During the period, iron implements were widely used for the first time and new types of implements introduced, the hoe being replaced to an increasing extent by the plough. The most important step forward in the development of farm equipment was the introduction of the wooden plough with an iron ploughshare, an extremely useful implement that is still used today in Central Asia.<sup>24</sup> The magnitude of the total area of farmland, including arable land, orchards, vineyards, etc., suggests the extensive use of the plough. Such vast stretches of irrigated land could not have been developed and cultivated with the hoe alone.

Written sources and archaeological finds indicate that the crops produced during the period under consideration were highly diversified. Different varieties of grain, fruit stones and other vegetable remains discovered in archaeological excavations show that the crops produced during the period included

22. Tolstov, 1957.

23. The main crops grown on semi-irrigated land were melons, pumpkins and other gourds.

24. An iron plough-head was found during the excavation of the Tal-i Barzu site in Samarkand.

practically all the crops known in the Middle Ages: cereals (millet, barley and wheat), fruit crops (apricots, peaches, plums, grapes, melons), industrial crops (poppy seeds),<sup>25</sup> fodder crops (lucerne), sesame seeds and pieces of cotton fabric have been found.<sup>26</sup>

Written sources dating from the end of the second century B.C. to the beginning of the first century A.D. provide extremely valuable information about the ancient farming system of the Ferghana valley. They describe Ta-yüan (Ferghana) as a province with a developed agriculture and specialized horse-breeding farms. A Chinese ambassador who visited Ferghana in 128 B.C. wrote that Ta-yüan comprised some seventy large and small settlements with a population of 100,000 who tilled the land, sowed barley, rice and lucerne and grew grapes.

As the result of a process of selection, transmitted from generation to generation, various high-yield crops adapted to local conditions were developed. It should be noted that the Chinese copied the practice of growing lucerne, grapes and walnuts from the farmers of Central Asia. Evidence of the increased diversity of agricultural crops and of the great size of certain stretches of arable land is provided both by archaeological finds and by the variety of the cultivation/irrigation systems and the melon fields identified in the ancient irrigation zone of Chorasmia. Of particular interest in this regard are the systems used for the irrigation of vineyards and melon fields in farmsteads west of Dzhanbas-kala. Here, the alternation of narrow (1.2–1.8 m) and wide (3.3–4.4 m) strips is clearly visible from the colour of the soil and, in places, from the microrelief. At the edges of the vineyard there are traces of a narrow rectangular building, with a row of nine large Kushan clay vessels dug into the ground (Figs. 2 and 3). In one of the buildings a ceramic figurine of a man with a bunch of grapes has been found, and this, together with other evidence, proves that grapes were once grown on these fields with alternating wide and narrow strips. A number of cultivation/irrigation layouts of this kind were brought to light and investigated in the neighbourhood of Koy-Krîlgan-kala, and many grape-pips and graphic representations of grape-pickers were found there.<sup>27</sup> N. M. Negrul, a palaeobotanist, has ascertained that the pips came from a variety of grapes used for wine-making and from large-size table grapes.<sup>28</sup> According to archaeological data, wine-growing was also extensively developed during this period in other provinces of Central Asia, in the Bukhara oasis, in the Ferghana and Merv valleys and in Parthia. One document from Nisa even records the receipt of wine from vineyards in eastern Parthia,<sup>29</sup> and it is no wonder that the Chinese were struck

25. Poppy seeds were found during excavations of the Late Kushan settlement of Kzîlkîr (Bukhara oasis).

26. Tolstov, 1962.

27. *Koy-krîlgan-kala*, 1967.

28. Andrianov, 1969.

29. D'yakonov and Livshits, 1966.

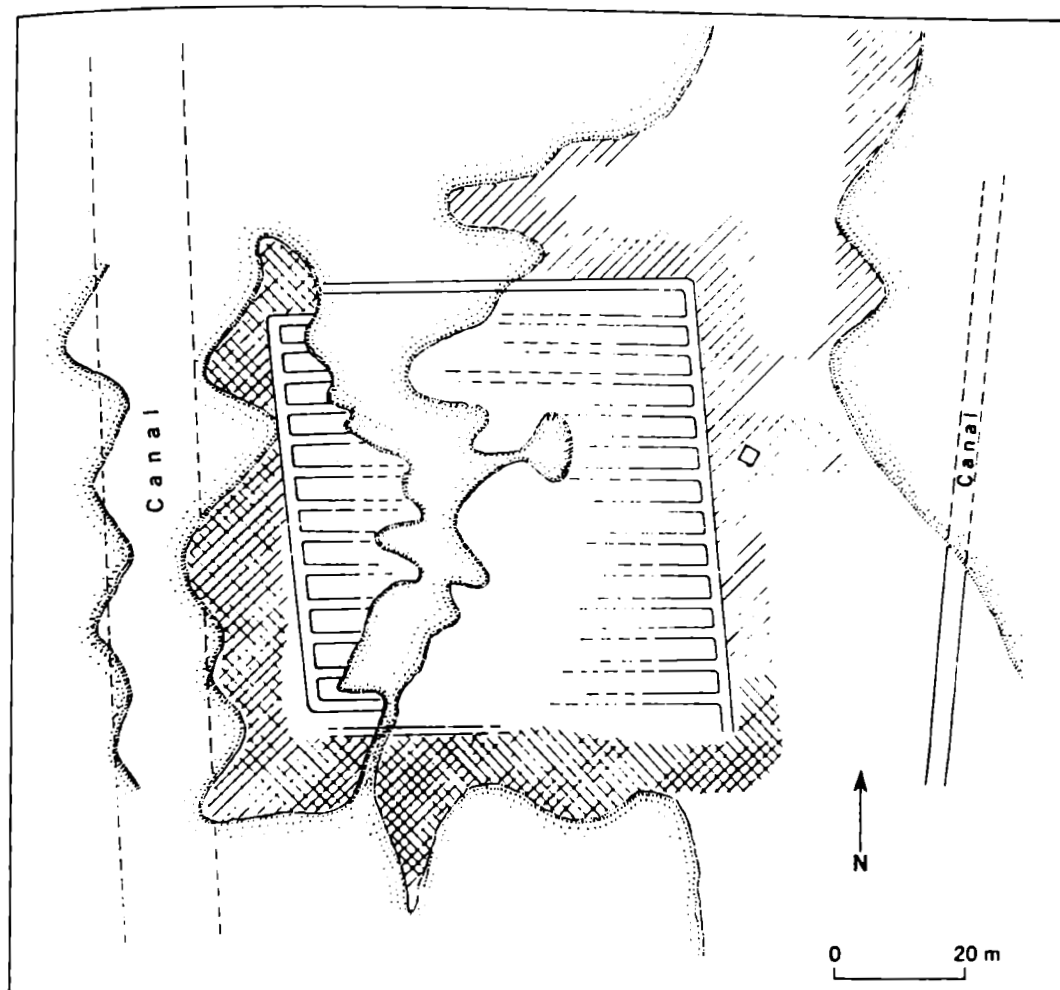


FIG. 2. Plan of an ancient vineyard in Chorasmia.

by the development of wine-making in the Ferghana valley. Chinese chroniclers noted the presence of flourishing vineyards and a wine industry in the Ferghana valley, and recounted that rich Ferghanians stored large quantities of wine and that old wine preserved its qualities over several decades.

It should be noted that the agricultural oases in the provinces of Central Asia did not all reach the same level of development during the period under consideration. The ancient agricultural oases, and especially their central areas where there were irrigation systems with abundant water supplies, were the most advanced from the agricultural standpoint. In these areas several types of crops were grown. In areas where regular irrigation was not possible, on the periphery of the ancient Chorasmian oases and along the lower reaches of the Syr Darya and the Zerafshan, especially in the north-eastern section of the ancient Bukhara oasis, in the Karshi and Tashkent oases and in the Ferghana valley, where there are vast foothills and forest-steppe pasture lands, the population engaged in mixed farming. Crop-raising was combined with livestock-

breeding, and only one type of crop was grown, usually barley, millet or the fodder known in Bukhara as *alapi-gau*.

Both before and during the Kushan period, livestock-breeding played a prominent role in the economic life of the ancient people of Central Asia. It provided draught animals for agriculture and transport, meat, milk and dairy products for nutrition, and wool and hides for handicrafts. In this period, according to the written sources and archaeological evidence, cattle, sheep, goats, horses and camels were bred in Central Asia. In the oases, people kept livestock in sheds and stables near their homes; in the steppes and foothills, animals were put out to graze on pasturelands; and in the mountainous regions they grazed on mountain grass, a practice related to the semi-nomadic way of life of some of the population. Horse-breeding played an important role in the life of Ferghana. This is clear from the frequent references made by Chinese authors to large numbers of 'splendid horses' from their reports of the Ferghanians' 'prowess in shooting from horseback'. The Aravan petroglyphs of horses were probably carved during the period under consideration.<sup>30</sup> Judging from the evidence we have of the cultivation of lucerne, it may be assumed that the inhabitants of the Ferghana valley not only drove their herds of horses out to graze on mountain pasturelands but also kept them in stalls.

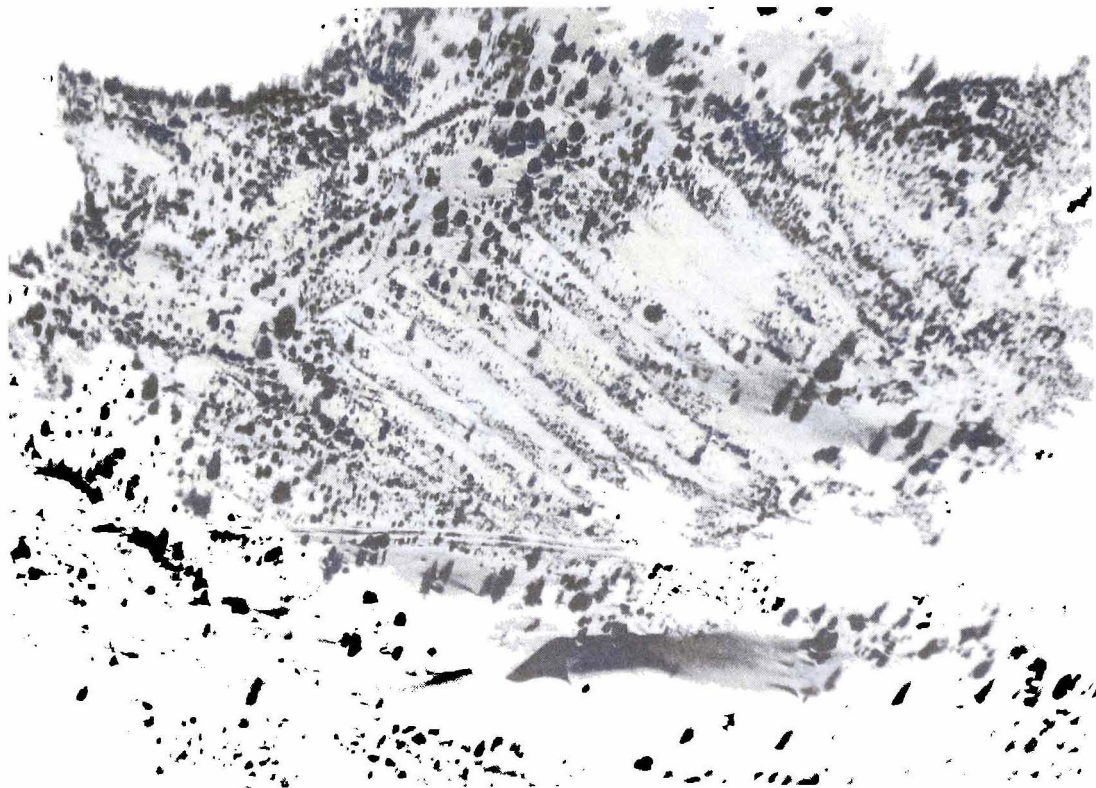


FIG. 3. Traces of an ancient vineyard in Chorasnia. (Courtesy of B. V. Andrianov.)

30. Bernshtam, 1952.

Cattle and horses accounted for a large proportion of the animals bred in Chorasmia; in the Bukhara oasis, sheep, goats and camels were common; and in the Tashkent oases, both small and large livestock were raised. The K'ang-chü regarded the ram as a noble animal. Farn, one of the Zoroastrian gods, was depicted in the form of a ram, and the handles of vessels were also shaped like rams. Ferghana horses were especially prized and were exported in large numbers beyond the borders of Ferghana. The two-humped Bactrian camel was famous in the countries of the East as a strong pack animal, suitable for caravans transporting merchandise over the difficult trade routes that crossed the arid desert. Further evidence of the importance of livestock-breeding in the life of the population of Central Asia in ancient times is provided by the numerous finds of statuettes of camels, horses, rams, etc., during the excavation of archaeological monuments. According to the estimates of the palaeozoologist A. B. Bashyrov, 61.6 per cent of the animal bones found during excavations at the Kushan site of Zar-tepe (Surkhan Darya valley) were remains of sheep and goats, 21 per cent were remains of cattle, 8.6 per cent were from asses, 4 per cent were from pigs, 2.6 per cent from horses and 2 per cent from camels. It must be noted, however, that although the inhabitants of Tashkent and Ferghana at that time followed a settled way of life and were engaged in crop-raising, livestock-breeding and highly artistic handicraft work, careful study and analysis of written and material sources indicate that ancient Ta-yüan (Ferghana) and Chach (Tashkent) were less developed economically than Parthia, Bactria and Sogdiana.

## Handicrafts and building

One characteristic feature of the economy of Central Asia in the first to the third century A.D. was the considerable increase in handicraft production, which came to assume considerable importance in the life of the country. This was to some extent due to the development of irrigated agriculture, which provided the necessary raw materials, and to the expansion of trade, which opened up new markets for the sale of hand-crafted products. Another contributory factor was, of course, the rise of the Kushan Empire.

The rich quality of the material culture remains of that period demonstrates clearly that high levels of development were attained by different branches of handicrafts such as ceramics, metal-working, iron-forging, weaving, jewellery-making, etc. People in large towns and small settlements alike practised a wide variety of handicrafts. Pottery was especially well developed at this time. Archaeological excavations have brought to light not only large quantities of ceramic products but also the remains of a whole pottery works containing several kinds of kilns. Both ceremonial and table ware of various kinds and shapes were produced in these kilns. The thin-sided goblets, bowls, cups and other types of ceramic products from the sites of Afrasiab, Er-kurgan, Bukhara

and Dalverzin-tepe (Surkhan Darya), from the Tupkhan burial ground (in Hissar) and from other such places are notable for their high quality. Many Central Asian ceramic products of the Kushan period are first-rate examples of the potter's art.

Almost everywhere there were craftsmen producing metalware and adornments for women (bronze vessels, candlesticks, mirrors, bracelets, earrings, rings, etc.) and these were very finely made. Archaeological excavations have brought to light moulds of various shapes for casting metal objects.<sup>31</sup>

Judging from the large collection of objects found in the ancient burial grounds of Bukhara (Lavandak and Kuyumazar, Shuravul) and Hissar (Tupkhan), weapons were produced in large numbers. In Central Asia, during the first few centuries of our era, the commonest type of weapon was the large (up to 1.2 m long) double-edged iron sword, without a tang but with a long, rod-shaped hilt. Other types of weapons produced included daggers, spears, battle-axes, slings and bows-and-arrows. One weapon extensively used at this time was a special type of composite bow, pentagonal in shape, the parts fastened together with strips of bone or horn. In the Middle Ages, this type of bow was known in the East as the '*kamān-i Šāši*' or '*Šāš* bow' (Šāš is the Persian form of the name Čāč) and was noted for the distance it could propel an arrow and for the accuracy attainable. The arrows were made of wood or reed, the heads being trihedral with a shank.

The ceramic or marble bobbins and pieces of cotton fabric that are frequently found at archaeological sites show that weaving was practised. The written sources tell us that between the *shahristan* and the citadel of Bukhara at the Guriyan gate there were large workshops producing cotton fabrics, shawls and curtains. From the jewellery of every imaginable kind discovered in many different provinces, it is clear that the jeweller's art was highly developed.

With the growth of handicraft activities and the expansion of trade, the extraction of minerals also increased considerably during the Kushan period. Metal ores, semi-precious and precious stones and other minerals were regularly mined. Mining developed rapidly, especially in the eastern regions of Central Asia. It is known from the written sources that iron, gold, silver and nephrite were mined in the mountains of Ferghana and Sogdiana, silver in Ilak, copper in Karamazar, rubies in Badakhshan and lapis lazuli in Bactria. Some mining products and metal wares were exported.

In the Kushan period, building attained a high technical level. Many towns such as Afrasiab, Kurgan-i Ramitan, Paikend (in the Zerafshan valley), Er-kurgan (in the Kashka Darya valley), Termez, Dalverzin-tepe, Zar-tepe, Khairabad-tepe (in the Surkhan Darya valley), Kanka (in the Tashkent oasis), Toprak-kala, Kunya Uaz, Ayaz-kala (in Chorasmia), Kukhna-kala and

31. During the excavations at ancient Merv, traces of large-scale metal production were found.

Kum-kala (in the Vakhsh valley) were enclosed by thick walls with rectangular towers. The towns and fortified settlements of the Kushan period were built according to a preconceived plan and had a very clear and systematic layout. Many were the administrative and political centres of the various Central Asian regions and provinces, and contained palaces, temples, workshops and dwelling houses. Public buildings were frequently of monumental size. Palaces and castles were built on high platforms and surrounded by strong fortifications. The massive walls of large chambers with high ceilings were decorated with murals and sculptures.

Central Asian fortification engineers were responsible for some major achievements in building techniques. The strong fortification walls reinforced by projecting towers, and the intricate labyrinths with multi-tiered loopholes, were some examples of major developments in the art of fortification at this time. Many different building materials were used. Fortification walls and monumental buildings were built of clay blocks and adobe bricks, which were usually square. Baked bricks were seldom used. In Bactria stone components (for example, base columns and capitals, the frieze from Ayrtam) were widely used for load-bearing structures and decoration. Ceilings were usually supported by pillars and beams. Where the span was relatively small, arched roofs were used. The largest Central Asian cities such as Bukhara, Samarkand, Ershi and many others became centres for both handicraft production and trade, and were frequently visited by merchants coming with their caravans from the countries of Western Asia, India and China.

## The coinage and monetary system

The political map of Central Asia in the Kushan period was complex. It is clear that northern Bactria and the regions along the Amu Darya as far as the middle reaches of the river formed part of the Kushan Empire. The other provinces of Central Asia constituted separate domains which, in the opinion of some historians, formed part of the Kushan state, while others have regarded them as entirely independent. It is probably nearer the truth to say that they were bound to the Kushan state by some kind of vassal relationship. It should be noted that most of these territories had their own coinage.

In northern Bactria (south Uzbekistan and south Tajikistan), the appearance of the specifically Kushan coinage was preceded by issues of coins (Fig. 4) that were copies of those minted by the Graeco-Bactrian kings Eucratides and Heliocles, the commonest being imitations of those minted by Heliocles; they were issued from about the end of the second century B.C. to the first half of the first century A.D. On the obverse was a bust of the king and on the reverse the figure of a deity with an inscription in Greek. In course of time the image of Heliocles was replaced by that of the local ruler and the Greek legend became





FIG. 4. Tetradrachm of the Kushan 'Heraus'. (Courtesy of E. A. Davidovich.)

increasingly corrupt. Although these coins were issued in silver, the imitations were struck in bronze. In size and weight they fell into four groups ranging from 12–15 to 37 mm in diameter and 2.2–2.3 to 26.5 g in weight.<sup>32</sup>

On the earliest specifically Kushan coins struck by the nameless king 'Soter Megas', the deity was replaced by a horseman and a Greek legend reading 'King of Kings, the Great Saviour'.<sup>33</sup>

In the reign of Vima Kadphises, a new type was introduced to the coinage which remained in general use until the Kushan state stopped minting coins. The obverse showed the ruler standing before an altar, while the reverse bore the figure of some deity. The deities, however, were rarely of Greek origin; representations of the Indian god Śiva with the sacred bull Nandi are repeatedly used; and on coins of Kanishka and Huvishka, eastern Iranian gods and goddesses of fire, wind, sun, moon, etc., are common. Although there were many Buddhists in the Kushan Empire, the image of Buddha is very rarely found on coins. In general, the representations of deities on Kushan coins seem to reflect the diversity of religious beliefs throughout the vast territory of the Kushan Empire.<sup>34</sup> Some Early Kushan coins of Kujula and Vima Kadphises had inscriptions in Kharoṣṭhī, but once the regular series of Kushan coins was established, each coin bore a legend in Bactrian only, using the so-called Kushan script based on the Greek alphabet.

32. Masson, 1956; Rtveladze and Pidaev, 1981.

33. Masson, 1950.

34. Zeimal, 1965, 1967.





FIG. 5. Coins of Kanishka. (Courtesy of E. V. Zeimal.)

Most Early Kushan coins were of bronze. After the reform introduced by Kadphises II, the monetary system was based on gold staters, or dinars, which usually weighed about 8 g, but there were also double, half and quarter coins weighing 16, 4 and 2 g respectively, though these were more rare. This was practically the only example of a gold-based monetary system in the whole of Central Asia and the neighbouring countries, where in almost every period right up to the Late Middle Ages, monetary systems were based on silver. Gold coins, with their high purchasing power, were used for major transactions and especially for international trade, and it was to meet the requirements of international trade that the gold coins were first produced, copper coins being used for everyday transactions. They were issued in several denominations, but after the reform of Kadphises II the commonest coin in circulation was the large bronze 4 drachm (tetradrachm) that originally weighed about 16 or 17 g but subsequently smaller denominations were also struck (Fig. 5). Large numbers of bronze coins have been found in nearly every province of the Kushan Empire. In northern Bactria, for example, Kushan copper coins have been found at the sites of dozens of monuments, and there have been many finds of these coins even in small rural settlements.<sup>35</sup> It is clear that large sections of the rural population as well as towns people were involved in day-to-day commodity exchanges involving money.

Unlike silver and gold coins, Kushan copper money did not generally circulate outside the territory of the Kushan state, and the area in which copper-coin finds have been recorded provides a clear indication of the line followed by the northern frontiers of the Kushan Empire. Copper coins have been found not only in south Tajikistan and south Uzbekistan, but also along the Amu Darya as far as Chorasmia. However, almost all the coins found in Chorasmia

35. Rtveladze and Pidaev, 1981.



FIG. 6. Chorasmanian coins. (Courtesy of V. M. Masson.)

itself had been countermarked, and in the opinion of modern historians, this indicates that Chorasmia was not part of the Kushan state.<sup>36</sup>

Chorasmia began minting its own coinage about the end of the second century B.C., and for a long time it minted only silver. The first issues were imitations of the Graeco-Bactrian tetradrachm coins of King Eucratides, but gradually Chorasmia developed its own types. The obverse bore a portrait of the king, and the reverse the image of a horseman, the Chorasmian tamgha and a Chorasmian legend (Fig. 6). The first copper coins were issued in Chorasmia at about the end of the first century A.D., but it was not until the end of the third century that they were minted in considerable numbers. The obverse portrayed a horseman or the bust of a horseman, and the reverse normally a monogram. Not all coins bore legends. While silver coins had been minted primarily for political purposes (proclamation pieces), the extensive issues of copper coins were a sign that major advances were being made in the economic sphere. The large number of finds in many rural settlements shows that ordinary day-to-day trading activity was already widespread. This last remark applies mainly to right-bank Chorasmia and not Chorasmia as a whole.<sup>37</sup>

Of all the provinces of south Turkmenistan, the most highly developed from the economic standpoint was the province of Margiana. Parthian bronze

36. Masson, 1975; Vaynberg, 1977; Zeimal, 1978.

37. Vaynberg, 1977.





FIG. 7. Coins of Sanabares. (Courtesy of V. M. Masson.)

and silver coins circulated there before the third century A.D. On both, the obverse showed a bust of the king, and the reverse a royal archer seated (Fig. 7). Early Parthian coins bore inscriptions in Greek which in time became more and more corrupt, and from the first century A.D. local inscriptions in Pahlavi began to appear. Although Margiana may have had its own silver coinage, the fact that it issued its own bronze coins, which have been found in large numbers not only in the ruins of cities but in many rural settlements, is of much greater importance. In the development of day-to-day small-scale trading and commodity-money relationships, Margiana closely resembled Bactria.<sup>38</sup>

In Parthia, another province of south Turkmenistan, the situation regarding the circulation of money was quite different. Although excavations at Nisa have brought to light not only Arsacid silver, but also Graeco-Bactrian, Seleucid Pontic and other silver coins, Parthia had no copper coinage of its own. This would seem to indicate that Parthia was less advanced than Margiana in the matter of trading and economic development in general.<sup>39</sup>

In the Zerafshan valley, several domains issued their own coins. In the first or second century A.D., Samarkand in Sogdiana began producing silver coins with the bust of the king on the obverse and the image of an archer on the reverse. Originally these coins bore legends in both Sogdian and Greek, but

38. Masson, 1957*b*.

39. Masson, 1955.

those in Greek gradually became corrupt and were eventually replaced entirely by legends in local Sogdian. At the same time the weight of the denomination was progressively reduced from 4 to 1 g.

In the Bukhara oasis, silver coins were issued from the second century A.D. They were modelled on the tetradrachm piece of the Graeco-Bactrian king Euthydemus and bore his profile on the obverse and a seated Zeus on the reverse. As was the case elsewhere, the Greek legends became increasingly corrupt and were finally replaced by legends in Sogdian. They did not suffer any significant reduction in weight but the purity of their silver was considerably debased.

The so-called coins of Hyrcodes were probably minted in the north-western parts of the Bukhara oasis. The obverse bore a bust of the ruler and on the reverse was the figure of a horse or a standing deity. On these coins, too, the legends were changed, the weight reduced and the purity of the metal debased.<sup>40</sup>

There is no evidence of the minting of coins in the Kashka Darya valley during the Kushan period. The earliest issues of so-called 'Nakhshab' copper coins were minted in the Karshi oasis, probably in the fourth century A.D.<sup>41</sup>

According to all the available evidence, Chach was the only province in the Syr Darya region that minted its own coins, the so-called ancient Chach copper coins with the head of the ruler on the obverse and a seal with a Sogdian legend on the reverse. This group of coins, which dates from somewhere between the second and fourth centuries A.D.,<sup>42</sup> has not yet been adequately studied. However, ancient Chach coins – and even hoards of them – have been found at many early sites, showing a well-developed relationship between commodities and money.<sup>43</sup>

In Central Asia, in the Kushan period generally, the minting and circulation of money increased greatly, and in a number of provinces, local coins – local with respect to their iconography and legends – came to replace the imitations of Hellenistic coins. At the same time, the economic development of the different provinces of Central Asia was very uneven. An analysis of the numismatic material indicates that northern Bactria and Margiana were the most advanced provinces, while Chorasmia, the Zerafshan valley and Chach were somewhat less advanced. Finally, there were some provinces, such as Ferghana, that did not have their own coinage and where commodity-money relations were still in their infancy. In general, however, it may be said that during the Kushan period there was a developed monetary system with coins of various denominations minted in large numbers. Copper coins accounted for the greater

40. Zeimal, 1978.

41. Kabanov, 1973.

42. Masson, 1953; Masson, 1966.

43. As a result of extensive archaeological research in recent years, 1,000 coins minted in Chach in various denominations have now been found. Previously only a few specimens were available.

part of the Kushan issues, as these were evidently necessary for everyday buying-and-selling transactions.

## Trade and commerce

Both internal and external trade and commerce flourished in the Kushan period. The development of trade and the strengthening of economic ties resulted, above all, from the consolidation of the supremacy of the Kushan Empire, the expansion of agriculture and the growth of handicraft production. As is clear from the mass of archaeological material from various ancient sites of the period, trade between the Central Asian provinces increased greatly. Items of trade included products of handicrafts and agriculture, and both consumer goods and luxury articles. Consumer goods such as cereals, fruit, textiles, pottery, timber, etc. probably formed items of regular and extensive trade within the country, which demanded the minting of local coinages in different regions – Chorasmia, Margiana, Samarkand, Bukhara and Chach – serving as a medium of exchange in retail transactions.

The agricultural regions of Central Asia were at this time conducting a particularly vigorous trade with livestock-breeders of the nomadic steppe zone. They were linked by a trade route that ran along the Syr Darya. This caravan route, which linked the northern regions of Ferghana and ancient Chach with the regions of the lower and middle Syr Darya and the Aral Sea area, served as a kind of two-way transmission line for the agricultural areas.<sup>44</sup> Cereals, fruit, handicraft products and weapons were transported along this route to the nomads of the north; in exchange, furs and skins, meat and milk products, livestock and raw materials for weaving were accepted in the south by the sedentary peoples. It is not surprising, therefore, that this period witnessed the growth of major cities in the Syr Darya basin, ruins of which have been found at Akhsikent,<sup>45</sup> Kanka and Shahrukhiya,<sup>46</sup> Otrar<sup>47</sup> and Dzhetî-Asar.<sup>48</sup> Foreign trade also expanded considerably in this period. The main trans-Asian trade routes passing through Central Asia linked the Mediterranean countries with India and the Far East. Substantial overland trade was conducted with India. The most convenient route from India passed through the cities of Taxila and Peshawar, and along the Kabul river valley into Bactria. From there merchants travelled by boat down the Amu Darya, over the Caspian Sea and across Transcaucasia to the Black Sea. They also made their way to southern Siberia. The

44. Litvinsky, 1972.

45. Bernshtam, 1952.

46. Buryakov, 1975.

47. Akishev et al., 1972.

48. Levina, 1971.

Silk Route from China to the Mediterranean countries had a branch linking Bactria to Barygaza (Broach), which had established regular maritime links with the countries of Western Asia. This branch acquired greater importance when contact between Bactria and the West was suspended because of international politics. In about 127 B.C. Chang Ch'ien discovered in Bactria some bamboo articles and textile goods which had come from Szü-chuan via India.

The main exports from India were spices (pepper, ginger, saffron, betel), perfumes and medicines (sandalwood oil, spikenard, musk, cinnamon, aloe, bdellium), lacquers and dyes (indigo, cinnabar), silk, rice, sugar, vegetable oils (sesame, coconut oils), cotton, precious woods (teak, sandalwood, ebony), pearls, precious and semi-precious stones (diamonds, sapphires, rubies, jasper, etc.), ivory, exotic animals and slaves.<sup>49</sup>

At the same time, India imported precious metals (gold, silver) and non-ferrous metals (copper, tin, lead, antimony), horses, purple dye, coral, wine, slaves and artistic pottery and glassware. According to a report by Pliny the Elder (XII, 8) dating from the second half of the first century A.D., the value of imports into India, East Turkestan and Arabia totalled 100 million sesterces. Some of these imports undoubtedly came from the Central Asian provinces of the Kushan Empire. Moreover, there is evidence of Bactrian merchants travelling to the confines of the Roman Empire, particularly to Alexandria in Egypt, one of the leading commercial centres, and of Roman merchants visiting Central Asia, where a fairly large number of Roman objects and swords have been found,<sup>50</sup> testifying to the existence of trade links between the Roman Empire and Central Asia.

Intensive trade was also conducted during this period with Han China, which exported silk, nephrite, lacquerware, hides, iron and nickel. Central Asian merchants exported glass, precious stones and ornaments to China. Luxury goods were the main articles of trade, as was usually the case in ancient times. The Sogdians played an important role in the development of trade links with China. In Tun-huang (East Turkestan), letters in the Sogdian language have been found, dating back to the early fourth century A.D. (or to the end of the second century A.D.). One of them notes that 100 freemen from Samarkand were living in Tun-huang. W. B. Henning estimates that the number of Sogdians (including slaves and their families) in Tun-huang must have totalled 1,000. Several letters contain information on merchandise, trade, prices, etc. The Sogdians living in East Turkestan maintained close contact with their home town in Samarkand.<sup>51</sup>

During the period under consideration, the rulers of different countries and provinces played an active role in international trade and enjoyed a monop-

49. Pigulevskaya, 1951.

50. Staviskiy, 1964; Masson, 1966.

51. Henning, 1948.

oly of trade in certain goods. They used to dispatch their ambassadors with large quantities of merchandise and valuable gifts, and formed their own trading guilds. For example, in Book 2 of the *Mahābhārata* (second to fourth century A.D.), there is a reference to gifts brought to Yudhiṣṭhira, the King of the Kurus, at Indraprastha (the site of modern Delhi) by emissaries of various peoples, among them Central Asians. From Vahlika (Bactria) came 'woollen blankets, of good proportions, beautifully dyed, pleasant to the touch', various fabrics, sheepskins, weapons and precious stones, and the Sakas and Tocharians used to bring horses 'capable of covering long distances' (*Mahābhārata* II.47).

## The Silk Route

A major role in the development of international trade during the Kushan period was played by the Silk Route, the main trans-Asian caravan route, which, from the second century B.C. onwards, linked China, India and Central Asia with the countries of the Mediterranean. It owed its name to the fact that the principal commodity carried was Chinese silk. The Silk Route began at Ch'ang-an, the capital of China at that time, and ran westward along the edge of the Gobi Desert, passing through Lan-chou to Tun-huang. At Tun-huang, it divided into two, one branch going south and the other north. The northern route followed a straight line from Tun-huang to Turfan, crossing the sand-dunes of the White Dragon salt desert, which at one time had been part of the Lop Nor lake bed. That was the most difficult stretch of the Silk Route, and the trade caravan guides – usually Sogdians or Bactrians – preferred to bypass the sand-dunes of the White Dragon and make a large detour to the north on the way to Turfan. From Turfan the Silk Route went through Ch'iu-tzū into Aksu, then from Kashgar to Ferghana via Samarkand, and on to Antioch in Margiana. The southern route from Tun-huang went via Khotan and Yarkand to the capital of Bactria, and then to Zariaspa and Antioch in Margiana, where the two roads joined. From Margiana the Silk Route ran west to Hecatompylos, the ancient capital of Parthia, and thence to Media, Ecbatana and Mesopotamia, and across the Euphrates to the ancient ports on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean (see also Chapters 16 and 19).

There was a constant struggle between the Chinese and the Central Asians, and between the Parthians and the Romans, to establish control over the Silk Route and so dominate international trade. As early as the first century B.C., Han China took control of the eastern section and launched a military campaign against Ferghana. From that time onwards, China had direct trade relations with Bactria. According to Szū-ma Ch'ien, from the years 115–114 B.C. onwards, more than ten missions a year were sent from Ferghana to the West. Caravans made their way unimpeded to Bactria, India and Sogdiana, reached Parthia and penetrated even further west. The seizure of the Silk Route,



which made it possible to maintain regular and direct contacts between Han China and the states of Central Asia and the West, laid the foundations for cultural and trade exchanges. From Central Asia, China received grapes, lucerne, beans, pomegranates, saffron and nut trees; the acquisition from Ferghana of the war-horses needed for the new Chinese cavalry was of particular importance.

Parthian merchants tried to prevent the establishment of direct trade links between the Roman Empire and China. Merchants from the Kushan Empire also competed with the Parthians and tried to become major intermediaries. The basic means of transport in this international caravan trade was the camel. The accounts of travellers suggest that some of the most difficult stretches of the Silk Route were passable only because of the superior qualities of the Bactrian two-humped camel.

## Social structure

Very little is known of the social structure and types of land-ownership in Central Asia under the Kushans. The Kushan Empire was one of the great powers of the period. It comprised a large number of countries with different social structures. It included fertile agricultural oases with many commercial and handicrafts centres and rural settlements as well as vast steppelands and mountain regions. In the towns, slave-owning systems existed, while in agricultural regions freemen in communes preserved in their way of life many aspects of tribal-clan relations. Such relations were particularly common among the livestock-breeders who lived in the steppe and foothill regions of Central Asia. Before the establishment of their empire, the Kushans had been a relatively small nomadic tribe and long preserved many of their own traditions even after they had settled in Bactria, but once they had become rulers of a huge empire, their patterns of social organization changed considerably. Detailed analysis of archaeological material (especially the types of settlements and material remains) shows that in the Kushan period there was considerable variety in social status and property ownership, patterns which subsequently spread to virtually the whole of the territory of Central Asia. On the local coins minted in Central Asia and in the 'Ancient Letters' and other Sogdian written documents, a wide range of terms is used to denote different social groups in the Kushan period and the era immediately preceding it.

There is some direct, and a great deal of indirect, evidence to show that the commune occupied an important place in the socio-economic life of Central Asia and in the ancient East as a whole.<sup>52</sup> This seems to have continued until the Early Middle Ages, for which evidence is available. Thus, the commune in Sogdiana was known as *nāf*; it consisted of the aristocracy (*āzāt*, *āzātkār*), mer-

52. D'yakonov, 1967.

chants (*xvākar*), and free peasants (who were members of the commune) and craftsmen (*kārikār*).<sup>53</sup> Of these three categories in the *nāf*, the highest status was enjoyed by the *āzāt*, that is, persons of 'high and noble birth', the *āzāt-kār*, or free persons associated with the *āzāt*, and the 'children of the *āzāt* of aristocratic, noble origin'.<sup>54</sup> According to the written sources, the *āzāt* owned the land and the villages and were the chief retainers of the local and provincial rulers.

Next came the *xvākar*, or merchants, who constituted one of the propertied classes. The third category consisted of the *kārikār*, who paid a poll-tax and were not regarded as noblemen. At that time there were certainly slaves and a dependent, subject population. The Sogdian 'Ancient Letters' contain terms such as '*bandak*' (slave) and '*daya*' (bondwoman). A fairly complete picture of the composition of ancient Chorasmanian classes and their use of slave labour in the economy is provided by documents from the Toprak-kala palace archives. These give the names of the heads of 'family households' and of 'house-owners', their sons, sons-in-law and slaves. The roll of the 'House of Gavšimava' (Document No. 8) listed a total of twenty-one males: the house-owner, his two sons, his son-in-law and seventeen slaves – including twelve slaves serving the house-owner, his sons and son-in-law, two in the service of their wives, two to look after the young grandchildren and one to look after the concubine of the master of the house. The 'House of Vavanšira' (Document No. 7) had seventeen males: the master of the house, his son-in-law and fifteen slaves, including twelve attached to the master of the house himself. The families described in these documents were very prosperous, as is clear from the large number of slaves in proportion to the number of free adult males.<sup>55</sup>

In spite of the very considerable number of slaves, slavery was not the only, and probably not the predominant, form of labour. Little use was made of slaves either in agriculture or in handicraft work, as their labour was not profitable.<sup>56</sup>

## Land-ownership

Unfortunately, historians do not yet have at their disposal concrete material on many of the most important aspects of the social and economic history of Central Asia during the Kushan period. There is virtually no information from Central Asia proper on the different categories of land-ownership.

There is, however, some direct, and a great deal of indirect, evidence that suggests that there were several different categories. The documents from the

53. Smirnova, 1970.

54. Henning, 1948.

55. Gudkova and Livshits, 1967.

56. Gafurov, 1972.

archives of Old Nisa, which provide some insight into the economy of southern Turkmenistan during the first century B.C., are particularly valuable. There was one category known as *uzbar* land. The *uzbar*, or levy, was already known in the Achaemenid period as revenue directly received from royal land. A number of estates consisting partly of vineyards belonged to this category. These estates – about a score of them are known – were largely *dastkirt*, or royal estates. The same estate might also contain *patbāzik* land. In Achaemenid times the term ‘*patbāzik*’ meant the delivery to the king of a contribution in kind, consisting of fruit and types of produce.<sup>57</sup> It is highly probable that a certain proportion of irrigated lands in the Central Asian oases belonged to temples. A special priestly class, who is attested in the area long before the Kushans, also probably possessed land during this period. The medieval name ‘*vagnze*’ was quite common in Central Asia; it was linked with the Sogdian term ‘*βayan*’ (temple) and probably meant land belonging to temples or shrines. Besides the royal and temple lands, there were private and communal lands. In all probability, there was more land under communal ownership than any other type. There is some evidence to show that communes owned whole irrigation systems and the regions irrigated by them, as well as settlements and grazing lands. Localities settled by rural communes were called *varzana*, *vardana* or *gava*, meaning village or rural district, and it was precisely at this time that the fortified settlement of Vardanze, in the northern part of the Bukhara oasis, was established. Unfortunately, there is almost no specific material on communal land-ownership; but it seems probable that the commune during this period was intensively exploited by the state and large land-holders, who tried to attach members of the commune to the land – a process that ultimately led to the emergence of feudalism in Central Asia.

57. D'yakonov and Livshits, 1960a.

## CITIES AND URBAN LIFE IN THE KUSHAN KINGDOM\*

*B. A. Litvinsky*

### The development of urban patterns

The evolution of urban life in the territories that formed part of the Kushan state, or were subject to its political or cultural influence, can be traced back to the Bronze Age. During the time of the Achaemenids, urban planning and architecture were strongly influenced by West Asian styles. Hellenism had an even greater impact on town planning in Central Asia after the establishment of Greek cities in the area. This was the time when cities began to amass so much economic power that they became an important element in the power of the state. In the Kushan period that followed (between the first century B.C. and the fourth century A.D.), Central Asian, Hellenistic and Indian town planning blended into a single form. During this period, the ancient cities grew faster than ever before and urban life flourished.<sup>1</sup> Archaeological excavations provide important evidence about the cities of the Kushan period – their layout, architecture and material culture. One of the most thoroughly studied sites is Taxila in north Pakistan, where John Marshall carried out extensive excavations between 1913 and 1934.

The Mauryan city of Taxila on the Bhir Mound was replaced under the Graeco-Bactrians in the second century B.C. by a new city at Sirkap, which remained in use up to the Early Kushan period. The city at Sirkap has the shape of an irregular trapezium, stretching 1,300 m from north to south and 900 m (at its widest) from east to west. Topographically, it is divided into two unequal parts – a lower northern and an upper southern city. Remains of walls along the dividing line between them still survive. The city was intersected from north to south by the main street with side-streets running off at right angles. Each of

\* See Map 6.

1. Litvinsky, 1973.

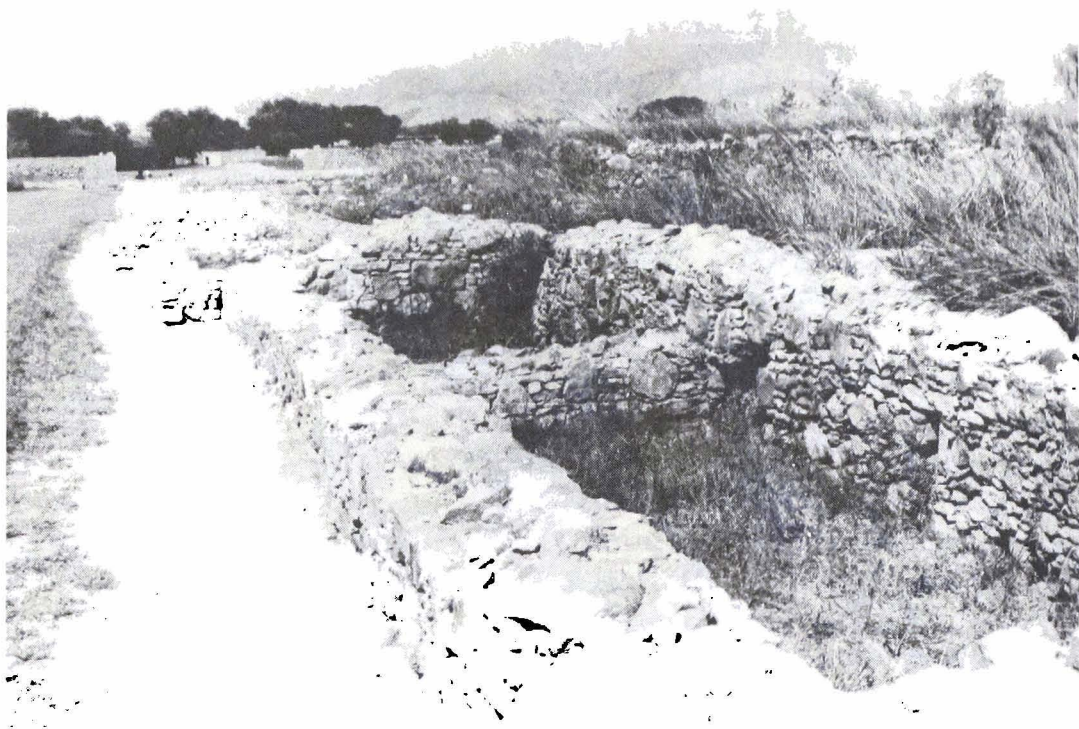


FIG. 1. Sirkap. Location of shops (?). (Photo: Musée Guimet/Tissot.)

the spaces between the side-streets (which were 36.5 m or slightly more apart) contained blocks of buildings, occasionally divided by small alleyways. Both sides of the main street were lined with shops (Fig. 1), as well as some shrines, especially stupas. Behind the shops and the shrines were the dwelling houses. East of the main street was the royal palace and, near by, some more opulent-looking two-storey dwellings. In the city and the surrounding areas, there were Buddhist stupas (Figs. 2 and 3), monasteries and shrines. Some 650 m outside the north gate was the non-Buddhist Jandial temple.<sup>2</sup> Early under the Kushans, the city was again transferred to a new site at Sirsukh (Fig. 4). This new Kushan city, founded under the nameless king Soter Megas, covered an area of 1,370 × 1,000 m, but has not yet been excavated.

Shaikhan Dheri, the second city of Charsadda, was laid out in a similar manner. The city was divided by a network of parallel streets some 36.5 m apart. Between the two central thoroughfares in the city centre was a sanctuary, probably a Buddhist stupa, and in between the streets were blocks of buildings.<sup>3</sup> Subsequent excavations have established that this city was occupied from the second century B.C. to the second century A.D.<sup>4</sup>

Bhita is the modern name for the ruins located 16 km south-east of

2. Marshall, 1951, pp. 112 et seq., 139 et seq., 1960, pp. 60 et seq.; A. Ghosh, 1948, pp. 41 et seq.

3. Wheeler, 1962, pp. 16–17, Plates XV–XVI.

4. Dani, 1955/56, pp. 17 et seq.





FIG. 2. Sirkap. Stupa 1A between the second and third street east.  
(Photo: Musée Guimet/Tissot.)

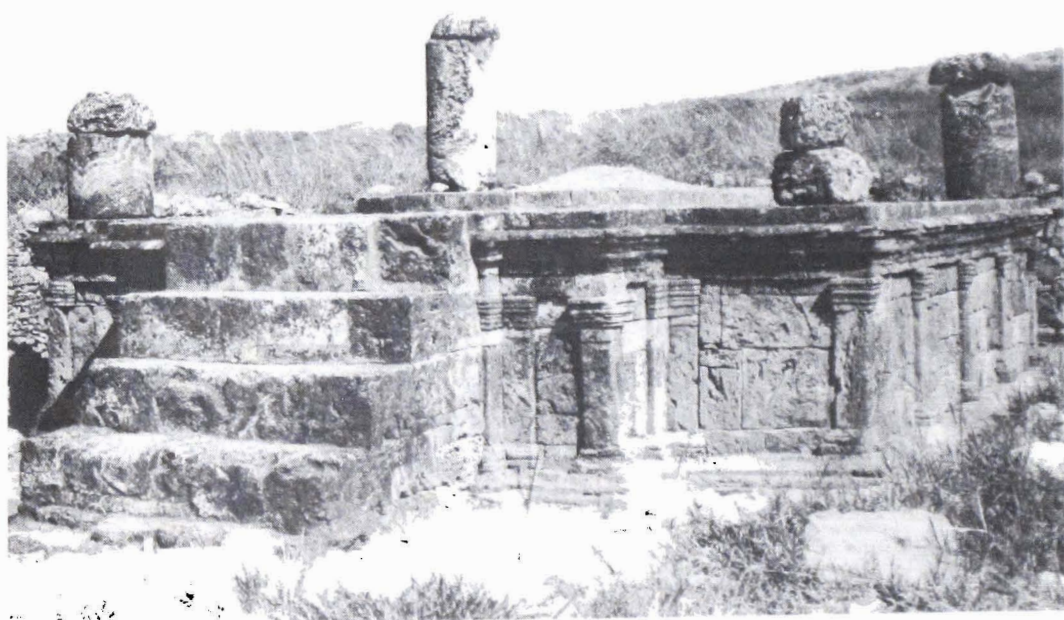


FIG. 3. Sirkap. Stupa G east. (Photo: Musée Guimet/Tissot.)



FIG. 4. Sirsukh. Wall running east to south. (Photo: Musée Guimet/Tissot.)

Allahabad. From seal inscriptions the settlement seems to have been known in antiquity as Vichi. Excavations by Marshall in 1909–12 showed that the city covered an area of about 26 ha, and was surrounded by a fortification wall 3.4 m thick by 12 m high. The city area was traversed by straight parallel streets, one of which, 9 m wide, the ‘Main Street’, began at the city gates and led to a sanctuary in the centre of the town. Another, half its width, which Marshall called ‘Bastion Street’, ran directly parallel to the Main Street at a distance of 45 m.<sup>5</sup> Although the houses on both streets had identical floor plans, those on the Main Street were noticeably larger. In the spaces between the parallel streets, there must have been two rows of two- or three-storey houses each accommodating between ten and twenty occupants, family members and servants included. It has also been estimated that the city had about 940 such houses and a population of between 10,000 and 20,000 persons.<sup>6</sup> In the block of buildings on the south-west side of the High Street was a house (14 × 13.4 m), consisting of a rectangular courtyard flanked by twelve rectangular square rooms. The house had two entrances on opposite sides (north-east and south-west) each set

5. The foundations of the buildings in the city date from the Mauryan period, but many of the surviving structures on the Main Street and Bastion Street were built and existed during the period from the first century B.C. to the third century A.D. This was the time when the city had a network of parallel streets. The buildings constructed in the post-Kushan period were not lined up on the same axis. Thus, Item 50, a Gupta temple in the centre of the city, and items 43 and 45, fourth-century-A.D. housing in the north-west part of the city, are all oriented at an angle in the axis of the above-mentioned streets (see Dani, 1955/56, pp. 40, 43).

6. Marshall, 1911, pp. 127–41; Schlingloff, 1970, pp. 24–7.



near the longitudinal axis. In one corner room, there are the foundations for four columns, and judging by the thickness of the walls, part of the building may have had a second floor. Marshall was of the opinion that this house could have been built in the Mauryan period. A seal found under the wall foundations and, therefore, belonging to an earlier period bears an inscription that Marshall read as '*Sahijitiye nigamaśa*', prompting the suggestion that the earlier house could have served as the office (*nigama*) of a guild, though the reading has subsequently been disputed.

From the seals found, it has been possible to identify the names of the owners of different houses. One belonging to Nāgadeva and built in the first century B.C., mostly of burnt bricks, had a section facing the Main Street which Marshall thought was a shop. Flights of steps, flanked by platforms on both sides, led from the street side to the central rectangular room of the shop. On either side was a much smaller room forming a lateral wing, and all three were built in a row along the street. Behind were the courtyards, on the farther side of which were the living quarters ( $11.3 \times 10.4$  m), an inner courtyard surrounded by structures mainly rectangular in design. The house was a self-contained unit, separated from the surrounding buildings. It had its façade on the High Street, with lanes on the other three sides and an additional doorway opening on to one of them.

Built in the first century B.C., this house remained in use throughout the Kushan period (seventeen coins from the reigns of Kanishka and Huvishka were found there). In a neighbouring house with a similar layout, an ivory seal was discovered in the fourth-fifth-century stratum bearing the inscription '*Śreṣṭhi Jayavasuda*', which Marshall interprets as 'the banker Jayavasuda',<sup>7</sup> but the person concerned, presumably the owner of the house, could very well have been the elder of a guild. Like others in Bhita, this house was surrounded by lanes. The same was true of houses in Vaiśālī, Rājagṛha, Kolhapur, Sambhar and other cities: each house was surrounded by narrow alleyways separating it from neighbouring buildings. According to the written sources, these alleys were three paces wide.<sup>8</sup>

In Sisupalgarh (ancient Kalinganagara), where the ruins of the ancient city cover an area of about 1.36 km<sup>2</sup>, the ramparts (10 m thick) enclose an area almost perfectly rectangular, with a bastion at each corner. As Lal has noted, this layout calls for a regular network of streets running from east to west and north to south, intersecting each other inside the city.<sup>9</sup> The same system was adopted in other cities in India, for example, Udegram.<sup>10</sup>

One of the most famous cities in the Kushan Empire was Begram, north

7. Marshall, 1915, pp. 36–48.

8. Schlingloff, 1970, pp. 27–8.

9. Lal, 1949, pp. 62–105.

10. Gullini, 1962, pp. 173 et seq.; Faccena, 1964, pp. 14–23.

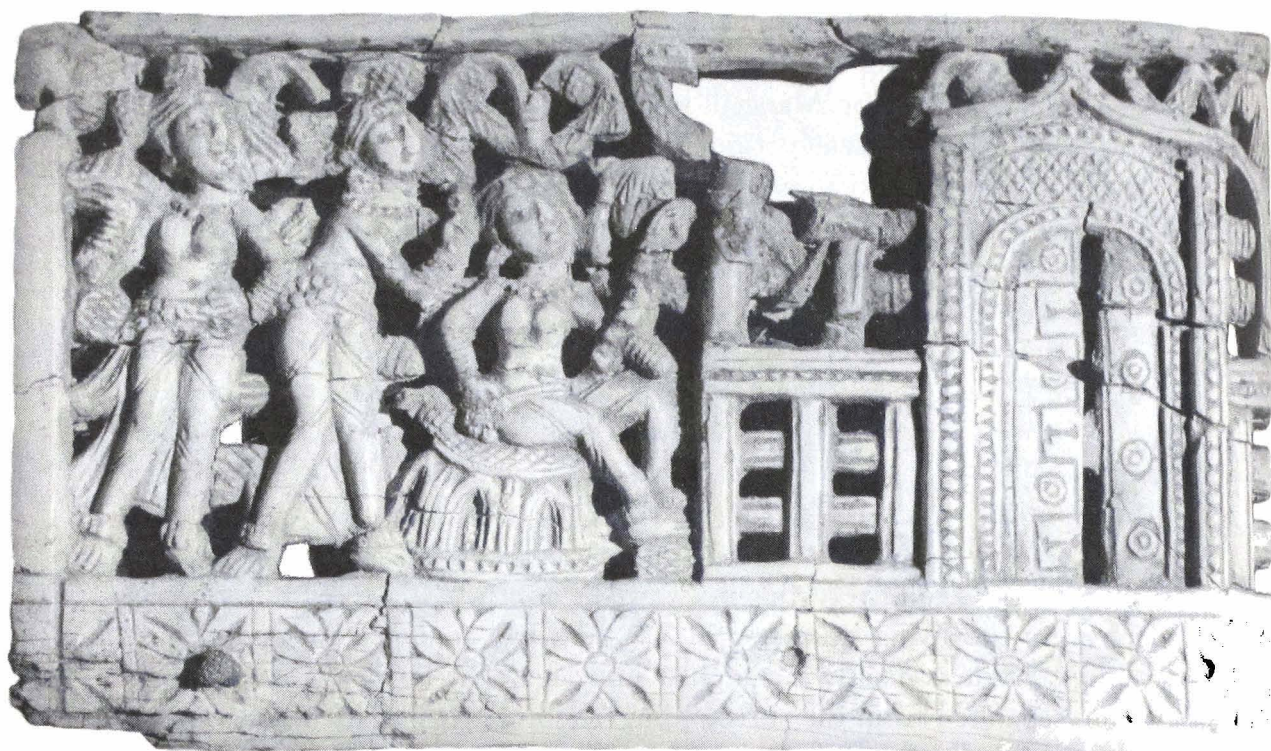


FIG. 5. Begram. Decorated ivory plate, first/second centuries B.C.  
(Photo: UNESCO/L. Hammerschmid.)

of Kabul, at the confluence of the Panjshir and Ghorband rivers. The city was rectangular in shape, extending 800 m from north to south and 450 m from east to west with a citadel in the north-east. The stone foundations (0.5–0.7 m high) of the city walls were set into the subsoil, supporting the main section of the wall constructed of square sun-dried clay bricks. Square towers were built along the wall, at intervals of 17 m, and in front were two parallel ditches. A central thoroughfare divided the city into two parts, and it is assumed that there was another thoroughfare at right angles dividing the city into quarters. In the palace in the southern part of the city a number of storerooms were discovered containing hundreds of articles of carved ivory (Fig. 5) brought from India, and Western objects of Roman date imported from the Mediterranean. The excavations yielded a large collection of articles of material culture.<sup>11</sup>

In south Uzbekistan, in Bactrian territory, a large city has been excavated at Dalverzin-tepe. The main portion, tentatively called the 'lower city', formed a rectangle 650 × 500 m. In the south corner, partly extending beyond the city boundaries, is a citadel shaped like a rounded trapezium (maximum measurement – 170 × 200 m). Outside the city walls were a Buddhist shrine and necropolis, and a Zoroastrian chapel (*naus*). The 'lower city' was surrounded by thick

11. Ghirshman, 1946; Hackin, 1954.

ramparts with towers at 30–40 m intervals. Outside the fortifications, as a further precaution, were canals, a river-bed and a ditch. The only gate was in the southern section near the citadel. In the Kushan period the city was densely built with large blocks of buildings, urban thoroughfares and water reservoirs. Houses belonging to the aristocratic section of the population were situated in the heart of the city, while those belonging to the poor were built on the outskirts. The southern quarters were inhabited by craftsmen near kilns and pottery workshops. It was there, too, on high ground that the temple of the Bactrian goddess was found. Two palatial dwellings (DT-5 and DT-6) had an impressive structure decorated with columns with Attic-style bases. Constructed with vaults and arches of sun-dried clay-brick, their principal façades were embellished with a deep portico bounded in front by columns. Behind the portico, on the principal axis, was a large vestibule with a reception hall beyond. The front part of the building, reserved for receiving guests, was separated from the living quarters by a corridor. All the dwelling-houses in Dalverzin-tepe (ordinary as well as palatial) had one feature in common – a special room set aside for household prayer, with a niche for kindling the holy fire. At Dalverzin-tepe some outstanding works of art were discovered, including many pieces of secular and Buddhist sculpture and paintings (Fig. 6) and a most remarkable treasure of 115 gold objects of jewellery, works of art and gold bars with inscriptions in Kharoṣṭhī, indicating their weight.<sup>12</sup>

At Toprak-kala in Chorasmia (Fig. 7), the rectangular site (2.5 km<sup>2</sup> in area) running from north to south is surrounded by a wall with many square



FIG. 6. Dalverzin-tepe. Fragment of wall painting showing the head of a goddess.  
(After Pugachenkova and Rtveladze, 1978, p. 48.)

12. Pugachenkova, 1976; Vorob'eva Desyatovskaya, 1976.





FIG. 7. Toprak-kala (Chorasmia). (Photo: © Vladimir Terebenin.)

towers. In the north-east corner was a huge castle for the ruler, with a large courtyard and a triple-towered keep, the remains of which rise to a height of 25 m. South-east of the castle was a building containing a large central area with a corridor running round, probably a fire temple. The residential area was bisected by a main thoroughfare running from north to south (where the city gate had a huge protective structure in front of it). At right angles to this thoroughfare were streets that divided the city into ten symmetrical blocks. Although the top stratum dates from the fourth–fifth centuries A.D. (and in a few sections from the sixth–eighth), the city was originally laid out in the second–third centuries. Each *insula* measures  $40 \times 100$  m and the street widths are 4.5 m and 10 m (in the case of the main artery). The buildings of the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. formed part of a large building complex developed at one time. It is not clear whether its large units formed part of a single architectural ensemble or constituted separate households. Small groups of two or three buildings – some of them craftsmen’s dwelling houses – were found in the outer blocks at Toprak-kala.

The palace, situated in the castle inside the square formed by the outer walls, had over 100 rooms on the ground floor, and there are remains of more rooms on a first floor. Three stages in its existence from the second–third to the

fourth–fifth centuries A.D. have been identified. The palace contained a large number of works of art (paintings, sculptures, etc.), and the ‘Hall of Kings’ alone contained 138 statues. This building, which dominated the whole complex, must be regarded as a holy palace because of its sanctuaries associated with various aspects of the royal cult. Adjoining the north-west section of the Toprak-kala site is the ‘north complex’ (250 × 400 m), which has an amplified layout and contains a number of imposing structures. Remains of bas-reliefs, sculptures and wall-paintings have been found in the halls. The monumental nature of the buildings, and their layout and decorations, suggest that it was an open palace built at the same time as the palace in the citadel. On the north-west side was a rectangular undeveloped plot of land surrounded by an embankment (perhaps a park or a necropolis).<sup>13</sup>

Mention should also be made of city-sites such as Zar-tepe, Kei-Kobadshah, Er-kurgan, Saksan-Okhur, etc. Of the various sites of the same period which have been thoroughly investigated by archaeologists, the Kara-tepe and Fayaz-tepe Buddhist complexes at Termez deserve special mention. The findings resulting from excavations undertaken at Dilberjin (Fig. 8) by a joint Soviet-Afghan archaeological expedition<sup>14</sup> are also of considerable importance for studying the history of the Kushano-Bactrian cities.

## City life in the Kushan period

From available evidence it is clear that life in the cities of Central Asia from the first century B.C. to the third–fourth centuries A.D. was incomparably more intensive than that in the preceding period. This is illustrated by:

The quantitative growth of the network of urban settlements and the emergence of new cities that had never existed before (at no time in the ancient history of Central Asia had there been so many cities).

The enlargement of urban areas in the old cities that had existed earlier and the increased density of urban construction.<sup>15</sup>

Further development of the division of cities into three parts: citadel, city proper and suburbs (which, in addition to houses and workshops, included religious buildings, especially Buddhist shrines, temples and cemeteries). Side by side with the cities which had this tripartite pattern there were also cities of other types, many of them lacking a citadel.

Fundamental internal socio-economic changes in the urban organism and the increase in the importance of the city in the economic life of the country,

13. Tolstov, 1948, pp. 119, 123, Fig. 62, 1962, pp. 204–6; Rapoport, 1981a.

14. Kruglikova, 1982.

15. The reference here is to a general trend; in certain specific cases, this trend was not evident.

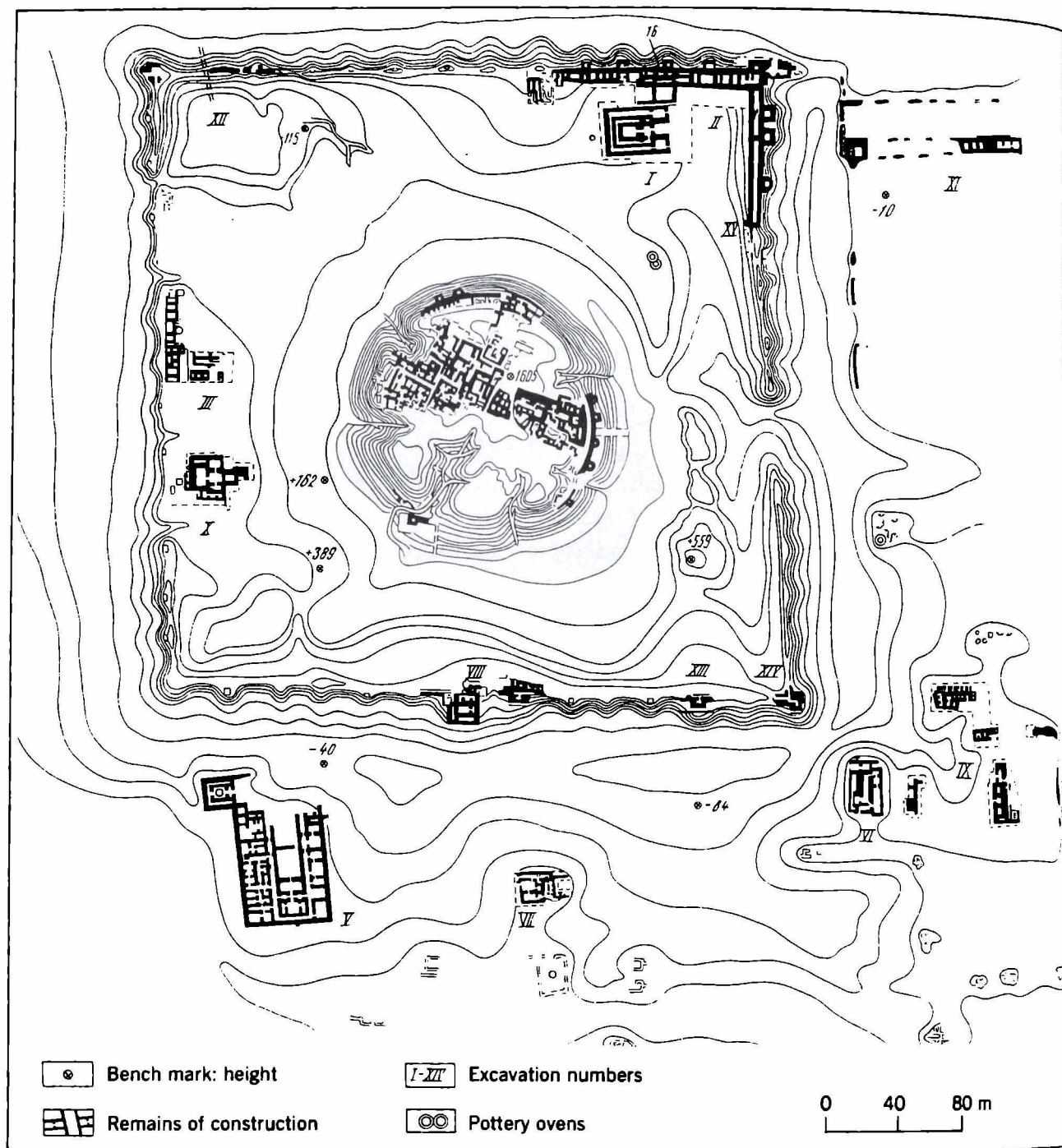


FIG. 8. Plan of Dilberjin-tepe. (After Kruglikova, 1979, p. 121.) (Photo: V. N. Yagodin.)



resulting primarily from the rapid growth of urban handicrafts. The cities became centres for the production of commodities for sale, hence their key importance in the city–village–nomadic–steppe system. With the concentration of religious buildings within cities the latter also played an increasingly important role as centres of ideological life.

These conclusions, based on material relating to Central Asia, can – as is clear from the available evidence – be applied also to other territories of the Kushan state. As Dani and Khan note:

The urban centres increased to a very large extent during the Kushan period. In the main valley of Peshawar all such cities lie to the north of the Kabul River along the old route that came from Taxila and across the Indus to Hund or Salature (present-day Lahur in Swabi Tehsil) onward to Puṣkalāvātī (present-day Charsadda) at the confluence of the Swat and Kabul Rivers. Here the routes diverged in various directions. If the city mounds that exist today on these routes are counted, it is not surprising to note that urbanization even in modern Pakistan has not reached that stage in the Peshawar region. This urbanization in the Kushan period was based on industrial development and on trade entrepôts.<sup>16</sup>

Ghosh, too, has noted that ‘the Kushan Empire comprised many cities in the Panjab and the Gangetic Basin’.<sup>17</sup>

The role of the city in military operations can hardly be overestimated. Cities were well fortified and some were virtually impregnable. The fortifications were designed to make the best possible use of the characteristics of the terrain, and were supplemented by deep ditches (one or two rows), forward outposts and thick walls with rectangular (more rarely, round) towers, parapets, etc.<sup>18</sup> Together, the fortified cities formed the defensive backbone of individual provinces and of the entire Kushan state. Thus, cities became vital components of the whole infrastructure. To mention only the case of Bactria, in Surkhan Darya province, some 110 monuments have been recorded, most of them situated in river valleys. Two or three are of Achaemenid date, about twenty belong to the Seleucid and Graeco-Bactrian periods and seventy or eighty belong to Kushan times.<sup>19</sup>

## City planning

In the Kushan period, both in Central Asia and in India, cities were still predominantly rectangular in shape,<sup>20</sup> though a few had other shapes: trapezoidal,

16. Dani and Khan, 1974, p. 102.

17. A. Ghosh, 1975, p. 109.

18. Francfort, 1979.

19. Rtveladze, 1978, p. 114.

20. Filliozat, 1959, pp. 251–2; Schlingloff, 1970, pp. 45–6.



semi-circular, circular or polygonal. Several newly founded cities, and some dating from earlier periods, were extremely large; but there were also small- and medium-sized towns. Some cities (the new ones in particular) had no citadels, while others had large ones. Indian sources contained a highly developed terminology for describing various types of cities.<sup>21</sup> On the basis of archaeological material, cities as organisms can be classified only in external and quantitative terms, that is, in terms of their general layout, component parts, shape and size. On the basis of such material alone, it is extremely difficult to describe the most important features of urban life, ranging from the principles of urban planning to details of municipal administration. When written sources are used, the situation is quite different. Although information about cities in Middle Asia is scanty, for ancient northern India there are many epigraphical and literary sources (the *Arthaśāstra*, the *Milindapañha*, the epics, the Jaina canon, the *Jātakas*, special architectural treatises and others), dating back to the end of the first millennium B.C. and to the first half of the first millennium A.D. and containing various kinds of information on economic and social history and especially on the history of the city.<sup>22</sup> In view of the parallel development of urban societies, analysis of Indian sources is especially interesting.<sup>23</sup>

The *Arthaśāstra* states that, in selecting the place for building a fortress or a settlement, it is important to take into account the features of the terrain, and the final choice must be 'approved by architects'. The city must be strongly fortified: there must be three rows of moats filled with water, a rampart, walls with square towers, etc. The city must be traversed by three roads running from north to south and three running from east to west, and four of the twelve city gates must be main gates. Within the city, the siting of various buildings – from the palace and temples down to the dwellings of craftsmen – is subject to strict rules (*Kauṭilya Arthaśāstra* 2.3.1–32; 2.4.1–32).<sup>24</sup> The layout of streets and residential areas must be carefully planned – *Suvibhāta* (*Rāmāyana* 1.5.8; 1.5.10: V, 53, 20 etc.; *Mahābhārata* 1.199.34).

The *Milindapañha*<sup>25</sup> gives a detailed description of the development of an ideal city:

A city architect, when he wants to build a city, first looks about for a district that is level, not elevated, not low-lying, free from gravel and stone, secure, irreproach-

21. A. Ghosh, 1973, pp. 45–6.

22. It was thought that some works from the post-Kushan period might also usefully be included here.

23. Litvinsky, 1979, 1981; Litvinsky and Sedov, 1983.

24. Kangle, 1972, pp. 66–72.

25. Horner, 1964, Vol. II, pp. 170–1, cf. the *Manusmṛiti* (Sanskrit code of laws), Vol. VII, pp. 69–74; the *Rāmāyana* 1.5.7; also the descriptions in the Jaina canon (Jaina *sūtras*), Vol. I, pp. 252–3; and Schlingloff, 1970, p. 7.

able and delightful, and then when he has had made level there what was not level and has had it cleared of stumps of trees and thorns, he might build a city there. Fine and regular [it would be], well-planned, the moats and encircling walls dug deep, the city gates, the watch-towers and the ramparts strong, the cross-roads, squares, junctions and the places where three or four roads meet numerous, the main-roads clean, level and even, and bazaar-shops well laid out, [the city] full of parks, pleasantries, lakes, lotus-pools and wells adorned with a wide variety of shrines to devas, the whole free from defects.

The description of the ideal city has much in common and in many ways is identical with the description of Sagala (modern Sialkot). From the *Milindapañha*, we also learn that the city gates had watch-towers. The city was encircled by a deep moat and surrounded by walls. Among the urban roads, special mention is made of the carriage-roads. The city had a large number of shops, thousands of richly decorated buildings and 'hundreds of thousands' of dwelling-houses.

The architect-builder 'plans the distribution of the carriage-roads, the squares and the places where three or four roads meet'. We learn that the city had a special inspector who sat at a cross-roads in the middle of the city, from where he could see anyone approaching from the eastern, southern, western or northern quarter of the city. From other ancient Indian sources (the *Jātakas*), it is known that the city had a special official, the *dovārika*, to shut the city gates at night and also to show the way to strangers.<sup>26</sup> The *Milindapañha* also provides a vivid picture of the city and its streets swarming with 'elephants, horses, chariots and pedestrians, with groups of handsome men and women; it was crowded with ordinary people, warriors, nobles, brahmins, merchants and workers' and a variety of ascetics.<sup>27</sup> Alongside the carriages, riders on horseback moved along the streets.<sup>28</sup> There were many strangers in the cities – people from other provinces of India and from Scythia (Saka), Bactria (Yavana) and China (Cina).<sup>29</sup> The shops were overflowing with goods. Some sold Benares muslin and other fabrics. From others came the sweet smells of flowers and perfumes offered for sale. The jewellery shops were filled with items of silver, bronze and stoneware, the store-houses were full of goods of various kinds including foodstuffs.<sup>30</sup> The streets swarmed with hawkers of herbs, fruits and roots, and meat, fish, cakes and other different kinds of foods were offered for sale. Anyone with money could drop into an eating house for a bite. Here and there street actors, conjurers and acrobats gave performances, or professional wrestlers were locked in combat.<sup>31</sup>

26. Fick, 1920, p. 157.

27. Horner, 1964, Vol. I, pp. 1–2.

28. Ibid., pp. 171–2.

29. Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 4–5.

30. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 2.

31. Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 171–2.

Other Indian literary works give an even more colourful and vivid picture of life in the cities of ancient India. The *Umbhayābhisārika* describes the city of Kusumapura with its clean streets and canals enclosed between rows of houses. Mountains of flowers (sacrificial offerings by devout city-dwellers) were heaped along the streets which were lined with shops where various kinds of goods were offered for sale. Occasionally, white-faced women were seen glancing out on the streets, opening the windows of palaces as high as the clouds. Finely dressed royal officers went about their business on horseback, on elephants or in carriages.<sup>32</sup>

The *Pādatāḍitaka* recounts that the streets of the city resounded with songs, the jingle of women's jewellery, the monotonous sing-song tones of people reciting and studying the Veda, the chopping sound of axes in butcher's shops, the clatter of dishes and the screeching of domestic birds. The city was teeming with local townspeople, visitors from different provinces of India as well as foreigners, including the Sakas, Yavanas and *Tuṣāras* (Tocharians). This text also mentions that some inhabitants of Balkh (Bactra) had come to settle in the city. It notes, too, that the entrances to courtyards and the courtyards themselves were washed down regularly.<sup>33</sup>

## Royal palaces and community walls

The residence of the ruler was located in the centre of the city, an area that also contained the more fashionable and better-built multi-storey buildings, which were not permitted to rise higher than the ruler's palace. Here, too, were many public buildings, including several picture galleries (*citraśālā*), open to the public and visited regularly. Such buildings were well constructed, special care being taken to ensure that the lighting was good. A picture gallery usually occupied a number of rooms linked together by passage-ways and staircases. The walls of the main gallery were covered with paintings of the heavenly world, episodes from the epics or astrological signs. Some galleries belonged to rich city-dwellers and some even to prosperous courtesans. The royal palaces contained magnificent picture galleries, far superior to those owned by private individuals. The *Ratnāvalī*, a seventh-century play by Harṣa, mentioned the picture gallery at the entrance to the palace. The palace had a special music room and many rooms were decorated with sculptures, carvings and paintings. Its park had ponds with small islands, on some of which there were gazebos (*Pādatāḍitaka* §33).<sup>34</sup>

32. M. Ghosh, 1975, pp. 4–5.

33. *Pādatāḍitaka* (Russian translation by I. D. Serebryakov), §§22, 24, 30, 35, 104; cf. M. Ghosh, 1975, pp. 114–15, 119, 123, 153; see also p. 123 for a specific reference to an inhabitant of Balkh, Hariścandra, of the Kaṅkayana tribe.

34. M. Ghosh, 1975, p. 117; see also Serebryakov's translation of the *Pādatāḍitaka*.

## Bazaars and dwelling-houses

The liveliest part of the city was the bazaar, bustling with shopkeepers and people selling their wares. 'Everywhere here men and women are clustering around the shops, and people are buying and selling' (*Pādatāḍitaka* §26). 'From the smithy comes the sound of the hammering; from the brazier's workshop comes the shrill whine of the lathe, and a hiss like a horse's breath as a sword is plunged into its scabbard' (*Pādatāḍitaka* §29).

Iconographic sources, supplemented by literature, provide a wealth of information on houses occupied by city-dwellers. Puri<sup>35</sup> notes this in relation to evidence from the sculptures of Gandhāra and Mathura. In the construction of a house, a raised terrace (*prasāda*) preceded the setting up of the walls (*kudyaṇ*) and columns (*stambha*). The roof rafters (*gopānasi*) were of wood (*dāru*). The rooms had several windows (*gavākṣā*) and a balcony (*harmya*) was a usual feature in large houses. In the Mathura sculptures a projecting balcony with couples sitting on it is usually portrayed, as are the *dvāra* and *torana* – gate and gateways. In rooms, partitions (*bhitti*) were set up for privacy and copings (*vedikas*) ensured protection from rainwater. The highest apartment was given a special name (*kuṭagara*); houses were painted (*varṇita*); the term '*sopanam*' suggests that the ground floor was connected with the top floor by stairs; and there was a separate ladies' apartment (*antaḥpura*) inside the house. There is further interesting illustrative material in the frescoes of some of the caves at Ajanta, especially Cave XVII.<sup>36</sup> According to the literature, city houses (not only the palace) often had a garden in the inner courtyard (*Kāmasutra* IV.3); one such garden was to be found in the courtyard of a merchant's house.<sup>37</sup> The *Pāñcatantra* (III.5.95) mentions a merchant's house, located in the main street of the city, standing literally on the 'royal road' (*rājamārga*). In the cities and towns, merchants usually lived in a special quarter (Fig. 9). This is clear both from literary and from archaeological sources:

These quarters were very similar to those of today. Lines of small shops with verandas that were raised slightly above street level. Opening right on the street, they were crammed close together, separated by no more than the thickness of a post. The open fronts were closed at night with removable shutters. The merchant lived with his family on the floor above, in tiny rooms, or else in living quarters behind the shop on the other side of an inner courtyard. Throughout the day, he sat cross-legged on the wooden floor.<sup>38</sup>

35. Puri, 1965, p. 98.

36. Yazdani, 1946, Plate XXIII.

37. Schlingloff, 1970, pp. 25–6.

38. Auboyer, 1965, p. 87.

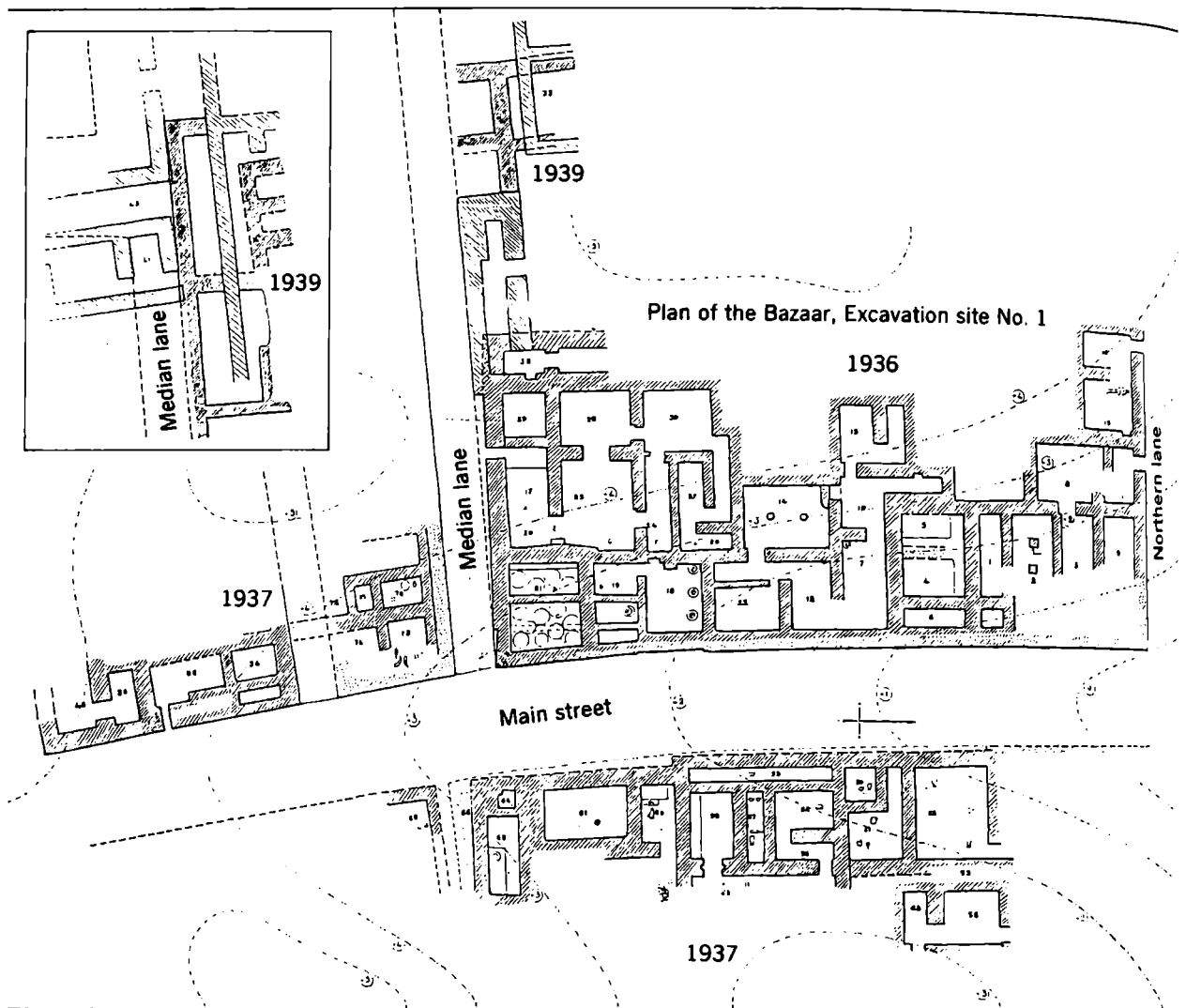


FIG. 9. Begram. Plan of the bazaar. (After Hackin et al., n.d.)

In Udeggram, every block was divided into two areas, one containing dwelling-houses, the other shops. In some cases, the shops were built in a row along the street. They were rectangular in ground plan with a small room at the back.<sup>39</sup> In every section of the city there was a network of alleyways, which crossed one another at right angles and divided the city into blocks (eighty-one blocks were sometimes called a *pada*, a number which appears to have had ritual significance). According to Indian architectural treatises, each such block or *pada* was associated with some deity, who was the patron of the block. Again, according to the texts, each block was surrounded by a wall and enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy; it had its own water reservoirs, holy trees and temples dedicated

39. Faccenna, 1981, p. 31.

to local deities.<sup>40</sup> Outside the city walls were the suburbs, which often extended over a very large area.<sup>41</sup>

Cities were centres of science and culture, especially fine arts and music. Many of their inhabitants were literate, and it was precisely to them that the monumental inscriptions were addressed. Specimens of the written language on metal, stone, fragments of earthenware and birch bark have survived and frequent discoveries of inkwells (at Taxila and elsewhere) provide clear evidence of the dissemination of literacy.

## City administration

Indian cities were administered by a governor. Subordinate to him were the three chief magistrates. The district inspector (*gopaḥ*) was in charge of ten, twenty or forty families. He was expected to know the caste, names and occupations of all the men and women living in his district, and even how much they earned and spent. There was also a borough inspector (*sthānikah*) in charge of each of the four city sections. Each of these inspectors managed the affairs of one quarter of the fortified city (*Kautilya Arthaśāstra* II.36.1–4).<sup>42</sup> The cities of Sasanian Iran also had district inspectors<sup>43</sup> and there is some evidence that districts were enclosed by walls. In India the municipal authorities controlled the activities of artisans and merchants. There are references to city councils and some cities had a city seal. According to Megasthenes (Strabo XV.I.51), urban life was administered by six committees, each of which consisted of five members and had its own specific functions.<sup>44</sup>

Information about the population of Central Asian cities during the Kushan period is very scanty, but if certain adjustments are made, information about the composition of the population of the Indian cities can probably be extrapolated to Central Asian cities as well. The documents from Nisa provide no information on the rank-and-file population of 'fortified settlements' (*diz* in Parthian). In these documents the commandant of a *diz* is referred to as a *diz-pat*. It is clear from the material in the highly specialized Nisa archives<sup>45</sup> that cities, especially larger ones, were inhabited by members of the aristocracy, the clergy and officials of the complex administrative apparatus. The high three-towered castle at Toprak-kala, the citadel of Bactra and the splendour of the

40. Auboyer, 1965, pp. 120–1.

41. Ibid., p. 125; A. Ghosh, 1973, pp. 53–6.

42. Kangle, 1972, p. 185.

43. Perikhanyan, 1973, pp. 393, 496.

44. Bongard-Levin, 1973, pp. 197–202.

45. D'yakonov and Livshits, 1968, 1977.

palaces in other cities constitute clear and unambiguous evidence of the importance of the aristocracy in the life of the period.<sup>46</sup>

The Kara-tepe inscriptions show that where Buddhism was widespread, an important role was played by Buddhist monks and officials of the Buddhist religious community (*saṅgha*). An equal if not more important role was of course played by the numerically larger Zoroastrian priesthood. The population in many cities included a number of foreigners. Harmatta<sup>47</sup> has calculated that some 30 per cent of the names found in Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions in India were Iranian, and Bactrian names predominate. Urasaka, a Bactrian from Noacha who was an official of the Kushan administration, notes in an inscription from Taxila that he built a Buddhist shrine there.<sup>48</sup> The *Milindapañha* (V.331), the *Mahābhārata* (II.47.15–31) and other sources provide information about Bactrians and persons from other parts of Central Asia who reached or lived in India. The situation was similar in the cities of Central Asia. Buddhist missionaries and pilgrims, merchants, representatives of the Kushan administration, soldiers and possibly craftsmen from India settled in the Central Asian towns and travelled beyond the borders of the Kushan state. In the finds at Termez we see evidence of scribes who had an excellent knowledge of north-western Prakrit and a thorough command of written Kharoṣṭhī. It is not possible to say whether they were Indians or Bactrians who had been well schooled in these languages, but in view of the role played by north-western Prakrit in the administration of the Kushan state and the life of the Buddhist communities, it seems probable that they included both local inhabitants and Indians. In both Central Asia and India, Sanskrit written in Brāhmī script is found.<sup>49</sup>

There are noticeable similarities in architectural styles. Some of these are due to the fact that in both India and Central Asia there was a Hellenistic element in the substratum of Kushan culture. A particularly striking example is provided by the form of stone columns, even though during the Kushan period the form of columns in India and Central Asia developed in substantially different ways. Other similarities were due to the spread of Buddhism in Central Asia and the adaptation to Buddhist religious architecture which, under the influence of local architectural and building traditions, assumed new forms and incorporated design solutions that were unknown in India. The synthesis of Iranian, Central Asian and Indian architectural and religious ideas gave fresh impetus to the concept of a shrine with corridors, and we know that Indian experts went to Central Asia to design and build Buddhist shrines.<sup>50</sup>

The *Sūtrālaṃkāra* (IV.21) tells the story of a pious artist from Puṣkalāvati

46. Livshits, 1984, pp. 265–79.

47. Harmatta, 1964, pp. 387–8; cf. Livshits, 1969, p. 64.

48. Konow, 1929, pp. 74–5; Litvinsky, 1968, pp. 13–14.

49. Vorob'eva-Desyatovskaya, 1974, pp. 118–20.

50. Litvinsky and Zeimal, 1971, pp. 113, 145.



who journeyed to the land of Aśmaka (land of stone) where he decorated a Buddhist monastery. Tradition has it that the *Sūtrālaṃkāra* was the work of the famous Aśvaghōṣa, a contemporary of Kanishka or of Kumāralāta, the founder of the school of Sautrāntika, which also dates to the second century A.D. and this should be the content of the story. The toponym 'land of stone' refers to somewhere in the north-west, probably in Central Asia. Some elements of Central Asian architectural and building styles made their way into India,<sup>51</sup> and decorative art in architecture reflected the synthesis that was occurring between the Indian, Bactrian and Hellenistic-Roman styles.<sup>52</sup> The construction of Buddhist religious buildings greatly affected the appearance of Indian and Central Asian cities, Buddhist stupas giving some of them a very characteristic vertical skyline. Common features can be observed in the nature and design of municipal service systems. Taxila, Dalverzin-tepe and the Chim-kurgan site all have the same type of underground sewerage system.

Cities were still political and administrative centres as hitherto, but their role as the focal point of handicrafts and economic life in general increased considerably. Merv, for example, possessed copper and bronze works, bone-carving workshops, armouries, flour mills, textile, ceramics and other industries, as also did Termez, Samarkand, Toprak-kala, Dalverzin-tepe and other cities of Central Asia. In ancient India, according to the written sources, various groups of the population, including craftsmen, had their homes in strictly delimited areas of the city. Their workshops were located in their houses. The streets of Taxila were lined with rows of buildings whose lower floors contained ateliers or shops facing the street. The same was true of Bhita and in Central Asian towns such as Toprak-kala, Merv and Saksan-Okhur.

## Craftsmen and guilds

Indian craftsmanship during this period was highly specialized. Among the various categories of metal-workers, the *Milindapañha* mentions blacksmiths, goldsmiths, silversmiths, lead-workers, tinsmiths, coppersmiths, iron-workers, metallurgical craftsmen, and even gold assayers.<sup>53</sup> The *Mahāvastu* (III.113.442–3) mentions tin-smelters, skilled lead-workers, copper-smelters, etc. Crafts involved in the production of weapons were of special importance. The sources do not speak of 'armourers' in general, but refer separately to makers of bows and makers of bow-strings.<sup>54</sup> The sources of this period mention

51. The *Pādatāḍitaka* (§52) tells of the embellishment of the courtesans' district with a 'mobile sanctuary from north Bactria', cf. M. Ghosh, 1975, p. 131.

52. Sharma, 1968, pp. 34–5.

53. Horner, 1964, Vol. II, p. 171–2; see also Puri, 1965, pp. 110–11; Adhya, 1966.

54. Horner, 1964, Vol. II, pp. 171–2.

(and in some cases even list) a large number of trades. The *Mahāvastu* (III.113.442–3) refers to thirty-six types of craftsman. The *Milindapañha* lists seventy-four kinds of occupation, most of them in the productive category. The *Jātakas* mention the names of eighteen guilds (*śreṇi*) of craftsmen and merchants.<sup>55</sup> The number eighteen is the traditional figure, but a comparison of various sources indicates that there were as many as thirty guilds.

There is some reason to believe that all members of a guild lived in the same area; for example, there are references to an ivory-carvers' street (*Jātakas* I.320; II.197), a carpet-makers' village, a potters' village, a weavers' village and a stone-polishers' village.<sup>56</sup> The *Jātakas* refer often to the *vaḍḍhakigama* (carpenters' village). One of them had a population of 500 carpenters and another 1,000, in which there was one chief for 500 carpenters. They collected wood from the forest to make the wooden components for different types of buildings. When their work was completed, they went to the forest again to collect more raw material.<sup>57</sup>

Professions were hereditary; thus, in the Pali texts, the word 'son of a smith' is synonymous with the word 'smith'. This is also borne out by epigraphic materials. References to the hereditary nature of the crafts are found in the writings of Kālidāsa. The heads of the guilds were noted by a number of terms: *pramukha* (chief), *mahattama* (head man), *jyeṣṭhaka* (senior). According to the inscriptions, an elder was known as the *śreṣṭhin* (best one). In theory, only a person who had achieved the highest level of skill in his trade could become an elder. The guild heads had their own personal seals bearing their name and the title of *śreṣṭhin*; they were assisted by agents and a secretary (*kāyastha*). The guild heads regulated working conditions and rates of pay. In consultation with the heads of other guilds, they raised or lowered their prices, depending on circumstances. In many cases the elder managed the funds of the local branch of the guild, the guild assuming aggregate liability for all its members. The head was in charge of security and had a special armed detachment to protect guild property and funds and to escort caravans. The guilds probably had special premises for their administrators, and special banners and ceremonial badges that members wore on festive occasions.

Some guilds were very rich and possessed real-estate, including some buildings and large temple-complexes. In the first century A.D., some skilled ivory-carvers from Vidiśā (near Bhopal) donated money for building the *toraṇa* of a stupa at Sanchi, one of the great masterpieces of ancient Indian sculpture. In the fifth century A.D., silk-weavers from Daśapura had sufficient resources to

55. This number is cited in the *Mahāvastu*. The term *śreṇi*, already present in the Vedic literature, had the general meaning of 'group'. By the time of the *Kauṭilya* it meant specifically 'corporation' or 'guild' (Kane, 1941, p. 66).

56. Geiger, 1960, p. 104.

57. Misra, 1975.

build the Sun Temple there, and thirty-five years later paid for necessary repairs. An inscription from Nasik mentions a potters' guild, an oil merchants' corporation and a water-carriers' guild, all of which had made large financial donations. The head of the guild enjoyed high social status and was sometimes a dignitary of the royal court. The state supported the guilds and protected their rights and property. In written sources rulers are warned not to interfere with the customs of the guilds, and to confirm their status. The ruler should only interfere if their usages and procedures were violated.

The guilds in turn performed specific public duties. At the time of official city ceremonies, craftsmen and the heads of their guilds stood alongside the aristocracy and the Brahmans (*Mahāvastu* III.442). In one of the fables of the *Pañcatantra*, it is said that in Vardhamāna, 'royal and municipal affairs' were directed by Dantila, 'chief of the merchants', who 'meted out punishment and distributed awards'. From the text of the *Arthaśāstra* (XI.1.4) some scholars are of the opinion that the guilds provided soldiers. It is clear that armed detachments, who protected guild property in peace-time, were placed at the disposal of the state during war. It is also known from the epics that the guilds were regarded as one of the pillars of state authority.<sup>58</sup> The few literary sources that are available for Central Asia contain no information on craftsmen's guilds, though it is known that they existed in Iran under the Sasanians, and excavations in Central Asia show that the various groups of craftsmen, potters, millers and smiths were each established in clearly demarcated quarters of the city. It is possible that the organization of the guilds was not so formalized in Central Asia as it was in India.

The 'Palamedes inscription' at Surkh Kotal, written in Bactrian, included at the end the Greek name 'Palamedes' in the genitive. Harmatta<sup>59</sup> concludes that the signature was deliberately added by the architect, who was anxious to receive credit for his work. Harmatta also notes three Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions of the Kushan period from India to which, in his view, the persons in charge of construction had deliberately added their names. From all this he draws interesting conclusions about the growth of social awareness among the artisan and merchant classes in the Kushan state. The inscribing of architects' names on buildings was a reflection of the high social standing they enjoyed at that time.

The output of handicraft wares was abundant, varied and of the highest

58. See Rhys Davids, 1901, pp. 862-7; Fick, 1920, pp. 275-80; Kane, 1941, pp. 66-9; Puri, 1965, pp. 106-7; Adhya, 1966, pp. 82-8; Upadhyaya, 1947, pp. 268-9; Chakrabarti, 1966, pp. 315-28; Auboyer, 1965, pp. 102-5. Between the fifth and seventh centuries, legal documents indicate that the guilds had written statutes and were obliged to have their own premises where their members could meet. The sources of that time provide detailed descriptions of their functions, statutes and administration (Chakrabarti, 1966, pp. 328-37).

59. Harmatta, 1964, pp. 338-9.

quality. This was made possible because of the high standard and complex technology of the equipment and tools available. The metal-working industry provided the city and rural areas with tools, household wares, ornaments and weapons. One branch, the jewellery trade, produced gold, silver, bronze and brass ornaments, with some decorative inlays. The jewellery and toreutics of the Kushan period were noted for their high artistic standard and many were genuine works of art. The textile, pottery, wood-working and other trades were very highly developed; so, too, were the building trades and the related architectural and decorative arts – carving in stone and alabaster, wood-carving, painting, etc. The extraction of minerals was also widely practised; handicraft production in the various provinces of the Kushan Empire was very diversified and individual provinces were noted for producing specific types of articles. Local schools of craftsmen developed distinctive local styles, though some ware was common to several provinces.

## Trade and commerce

The high rate of marketable output of urban production, the need for exchange of goods between cities and their agricultural environment and territorial differences were the factors that led to the extensive growth of trade within cities and between the provinces of the Kushan state. According to Indian sources, there were two types of merchants: the *vaṇīk* (those who had regular shops) and the *sāṛthavāha* (caravan traders). The caravan traders also had their elders. Because of poor roads and the dangers that might be encountered along them, including attacks by bandits, the caravan trade found that large, well-equipped and well-protected caravans were safest; the *Milindapañha* mentions a merchant who travelled to Pāṭaliputra with a train of 500 wagons. During the Kushan period, according to *The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea* and Indian sources, merchant vessels also sailed the high seas and, taking advantage of the monsoon winds, crossed the Indian Ocean.<sup>60</sup>

Trade between the different provinces of the Kushan state is well documented by archaeological finds in Central Asia. Articles imported from the Indian provinces included ivoryware, precious stones, jewellery and other ornamental objects. But trade was not confined to the provinces as its maritime and overland routes linked the Kushan Empire to the Mediterranean, the Far East, the wooded steppes and South-East Asia. The movement of goods and cultural treasures was a two-way process, creating opportunities for cultural cross-fertilization in the areas of thought, art, architecture and material production.

60. Puri, 1965, pp. 107–8; Frisk, 1974; Warmington, 1974; Thorley, 1969; Schmitthenner, 1979.

## RELIGIONS IN THE KUSHAN EMPIRE\*

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## Religious life in Bactria before the Kushan conquest

On the eve of the nomadic invasions of the second century B.C. religious life in Bactria and the adjacent territories was characterized by a number of religious beliefs and cults of different origin. Zoroastrianism played an important role among the Iranian-speaking population, and the teaching of Zoroaster had conquered the eastern Iranian territories before Alexander's conquest<sup>1</sup> even though many remains of pre-Zoroastrian religious ideas and cults probably survived. The traditions of pre-Zoroastrian Iranian religion, however, prevailed in the territories north of the Oxus and to a greater extent among the Iranian nomadic tribes of the steppes. The Zoroastrian calendar had already been adopted in Persia, Parthia, Bactria and Chorasmia,<sup>2</sup> while the Sogdian system of month names differs because the majority of pre-Zoroastrian month names were maintained in Sogdiana. In any case there seem to have been some major differences between original Zoroastrianism and later Zoroastrian orthodoxy. The latter, with its iconoclastic tendency which appeared at the end of the Arsacid age, never became firmly established on the territory of eastern Iran, though later, under the influence of Kartir (Kirdar), the *mobed*, great efforts were made to strengthen Zoroastrian ecclesiastical organization and orthodoxy – resulting in the persecution of Christianity, Buddhism and other religions.

At the time of the nomadic invasions, however, Zoroastrian orthodoxy did not yet exist in Bactria. On the contrary, a considerable number of Greek settlers living in the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom formed religious communities worshipping their own gods and practising their own cults. Archaeological

\* See Map 4.

1. Gnoli, 1980, pp. 215 et seq., pp. 227 et seq.

2. Harmatta, 1969, pp. 369 et seq.

finds and the coinage of the Graeco-Bactrian kings attest to worship of the major Greek divinities: Zeus, Poseidon, Apollo, Helios, Heracles, Dionysus, the Dioscuri, Athena, Artemis, Hecate and Nike. Greek and Iranian religious ideas and cults influenced each other, while Greek religious architecture and art influenced the building of sanctuaries and created the iconography for Iranian deities.

In eastern Iran, as everywhere, the Greeks attempted to understand local religious ideas and to identify local divinities with Greek ones (*interpretatio Graeca*). Zeus was identified with Ahura Mazda, Heracles with Verethragna, Apollo and Helios with Mithra, Artemis with Nana. The Greek interpretation of Iranian divinities to a great extent determined their iconography. Apparently Greek forms of religious worship even influenced Iranian cults. This can be seen in the Greek votive inscription from the sanctuary of the god Oxus at Takht-i Sangin. The inscription was incised on a little stone altar with the bronze figure of Marsyas playing a two-branched flute. The donor bears the Iranian name \**Ātrosauka*<sup>3</sup> and dedicated his votive present to the god Vaxšu (Oxus). Here, both the believer and the god are Iranian, but the form of worship (the votive altar with the bronze figure of Marsyas and the dedicatory inscription) is Greek, excellent evidence for Graeco-Iranian syncretism in the religious life of Graeco-Bactria.

The spread of Indian religions also began under Graeco-Bactrian rulers at this period. According to the testimony of the Greek and Aramaic versions of the rock edicts of Aśoka (see Chapter 16), the beginning of Buddhist missions to Bactria dates back to the third century B.C. The spread of Buddhism and Brahmanism was due to Indian merchants and craftsmen emigrating to the great centres of Graeco-Bactria (see Chapter 17 and the inscription of the potter Puṇyamitra from Begram). The Greeks were also open to Indian religious ideas as is attested by the pillar inscription of Heliodoros, the ambassador of King Antialcidas who became a worshipper of Vishnu and erected the Garuda pillar with an inscription in Brāhmī in honour of Vishnu at Besnagar.

Local cults like that of the Oxus played an important role among the Iranian, Indian, Dardic and Kafiri population. The Graeco-Bactrian kings were all aware of the importance of these local cults and sometimes represented an important local god or goddess on their coins. The 'City-Goddess of Kāpiśa' appears on the coins of a late Eucratides in the form of a female deity wearing a turreted crown and seated on a throne. The representation of this city-deity can be compared to that of Zeus seated on the throne (i.e. it is Greek in character), but the elephant to the left and the *caitya* to the right clearly refer to an Indian religious sphere. Thus, if the altar of Ātrosauka furnishes an excellent case for Graeco-Indian religious syncretism, then the figure of the city-deity of Kāpiśa

3. Litvinsky and Sedov, 1984, p. 61.



provides first-class testimony for the amalgamation of Graeco-Indian religious ideas. Iranian, Greek and Indian religious cults existed side by side, influencing each other with their rich religious ideas and forms of worship and resulting in religious syncretism which continued to influence religious life after the establishment of Kushan rule in Bactria.

## The ancient religion of the Sakas and Kushans

When the Saka and Yüeh-chih tribes arrived in Bactria, they must have had their own religious ideas and cults. For lack of relevant direct evidence, however, it is an arduous task to form an idea of their ancient religion. There can be hardly any doubt that the ancient religion of the Sakas and Kushans was not Zoroastrianism. In spite of some uncertainty in identifying the lands in the list of lands in the first chapter of the *Videvdāt*,<sup>4</sup> it is clear that neither the former dwelling place of the Sakas nor the ancient home of the Yüeh-chih belonged to the territories where Zoroastrianism spread at an early date. Thus, Saka *urmaysde* (sun), going back to Old Iranian \**Ahura-mazdāh*-, cannot be used as evidence for the Zoroastrianism of the Saka tribes. On the contrary, it shows that the name \**Ahura-mazdāh*- is pre-Zoroastrian, and this is confirmed by the occurrence in Assyrian sources of the form *Asara Mazas*, which reflects the Proto-Iranian form \**Asura mazdās*- of the name *Ahura-mazdāh*-.

The Saka and the Assyrian evidence clearly supports the assumption that \**Asura mazdās*- was a pre-Zoroastrian divinity of the Iranian tribes with a strong solar character which led to the semantic development *Ahura-mazdāh*- > *urmaysde* 'sun' in Saka.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, there can hardly be any doubt that the Kushans already worshipped Ahura Mazda before their acquaintance with Zoroastrianism in form of a god of heaven with strong solar features. Beside Ahura Mazda the pre-Zoroastrian worship of Mithra, Aryaman, Vayu, Aša, Yama, Verethragna, Spenta Ārmaitiš and the cult of Hauma are attested by linguistic evidence. It is questionable, however, whether the same religious ideas, gods and cults existed throughout all the extensive territory inhabited by the Iranian tribes in pre-Zoroastrian times. It seems, for example, that the worship of Mithra, Aryaman, Vayu and Yama was not known among the Iranian nomads of Central Asia and was consequently also unknown among the Sakas and Kushans, while the cult of Ahura Mazda and Spenta Ārmaitiš can probably be assumed on the basis of Saka *urmaysde* 'sun' and *śśandrāmata* 'name of a goddess'.

Differences in religion between the Iranian nomadic peoples are clearly shown by Herodotus who attests the worship of Zeus, Ge, Apollo, Aphrodite

4. Gnoli, 1980, pp. 23 et seq.

5. Steblin-Kamenskiy, 1981, p. 238.

Urania, Poseidon, Heracles and Ares (according to the *interpretatio Graeca*) among the Scythians (IV. 59), while he emphasizes (I.216) that the Massagetae of Central Asia only worship the sun. Consequently the pre-Zoroastrian religion, which we deduce from the evidence of common Indo-Iranian (Avestan and Rigvedic) religious terminology, probably flourished only in the eastern territories, adjacent to the area inhabited by the ancient Indian tribes, while the religion of the northern Iranian nomads living in eastern Europe and Central Asia may have had other peculiar features.

Thus, instead of the cult of Hauma, the cult of Hemp is attested among the Scythian tribes. On the basis of Pashto *ōma*, 'name of a plant', Munji *yūmenä*, 'name of a plant' (< \**haumana*-), Wakhī *yimik*, 'Ephedra' (< \**hau-maka*-, cf. *yīr* 'sun' < \**hūr*) again we can perhaps count with the existence among the eastern Iranian tribes, Sakas and Kushans of the Hauma cult in pre-Zoroastrian times. Vayu is attested by Ossetian *vayuk*, 'giant, devil' (< \**vayu-ka*-) and the Alanian personal name *Vayuk* (inscription of Ladánybene, fourth century A.D. in runic script) for the north-western Iranian nomads. On the other hand the north-eastern tribes preserved a rich pre-Zoroastrian religious terminology, surviving in Khotan Saka, Southern Saka and in the language of the Kushans (see Chapter 16). The most important are the following: Khotan Saka *vvuva*-, 'god' < *βaya*-, *gyays*-, *jays*-, 'to sacrifice', *gyasta*-, 'god'; Southern Saka *jasta*-, 'god' < \**yazata*-; Khotan Saka *dyū*-, 'demon' < \**daiva*-, which also was known according to the testimony of Ossetic *äv-deu*, 'evil spirit', among the north-western Iranian nomads.

Essentially the Sakas and Kushans who invaded Graeco-Bactria may have had similar religious ideas and cults to the population of Sogdiana and Bactria in pre-Zoroastrian times. They probably worshipped *Ahuramazdāh* as 'God of Heaven' with solar features and *Švantā Ārmatī* as 'Goddess of Earth'. They were acquainted with several categories of divine beings such as *daivas*, *yazatas*, and *bagas*; and used the verb *yaz*- as a term for sacrifice and worship, and the words *baga-spāsika*- and *bagana-pati*- to denote different categories of priests.

## The epoch of the Kushan *yabghus*

When the Sakas and Kushans conquered the Graeco-Bactrian territories north of the Oxus, they found manifestations of Greek religious life, religious architecture, sculpture, ideas and worship. If the first centre of the Kushan *yabghu* can really be identified with Khalchayan in the Surkhan Darya valley, the finds discovered there will enable us to follow step by step the formation and development of the religious life and religious policy of the Kushan rulers. On the coins of the first-known Kushan *yabghu*, Sanab, the spelling *HIAOY*, previously read erroneously as *Heraiou* or *Miaiou*, is not the name, but the title of the ruler, and should be read as *hyau*, representing the most archaic form of the

title *yau*, *yavu*, *yabgu*. Nike, the Greek goddess of victory, already appears. Apparently the Kushan aristocracy tried to adopt the royal ideology of the Graeco-Bactrian kings and its religious implications. It is therefore no accident that in the sculptural decoration of the Kushan manor-house at Khalchayan the enthroned ruler and his wife appear again with Nike.<sup>6</sup> It is a remarkable fact that Nike is represented in the company of a bearded god with a radiate halo and the Hellenistic Mithra. Beside Nike and the bearded god, a sculpture of Athena was also discovered at Khalchayan. If the bearded god can be identified with Zeus, who also has a radiate halo on the local copies of coins of Heliocles, then we obtain an interesting insight into Graeco-Bactrian-Kushan religious syncretism. Zeus with a radiate halo was obviously interpreted as the pre-Zoroastrian Kushan-Saka Ahura Mazda of solar character, that is, the Greek sculptor created an iconography that expressed both Graeco-Bactrian and Kushan religious ideas. It is noteworthy that beside the Greek winged Nike and the Graeco-Kushan Zeus/Ahura Mazda, the Hellenistic Mithra represents a third type of Graeco-Iranian syncretism. The Kushans may already have been acquainted with the cult of Mithra in Sogdiana before they invaded Bactria proper, because the name of an Iranian noble (*Sisi-miθra*-, 'devoted to Mithra') provides evidence for the cult of Mithra on territory north of the Oxus in the time of Alexander the Great. The figure of Mithra wearing a Phrygian cap from Khalchayan recalls the representation of the Western Mithra – the Graeco-Roman Mithras – and was the result of Graeco-Iranian syncretism which the sculptor adapted to the Kushan Mithra. The presence of Nike on coins of Sanab, the first Kushan *yabghu*, and in his manor-house at Khalchayan is clear evidence for the existence of a goddess of victory who was called either Nike or Vanindo in the royal ideology of the Kushan rulers before the rise of the Great Kushans.

The coinage of the next Kushan ruler, Kujula Kadphises, enables us to see how the religious horizon of the Kushans was enlarged. His first issue, which has the debased portrait and name of Hermaeus on the obverse, shows Heracles on the reverse, still following the Greek tradition, even though Heracles may be the *interpretatio Graeca* of the Iranian god Verethragna. On the reverse, however, the legend is already written in Kharoṣṭhī script: *Kujula Kasasa Kuṣana yavugasa dhramaṭhidas* 'of Kujula Kasa, the Kushan *yabghu*, who is steadfast in the Law'. The epithet *dhramaṭhida*- < *dharmasṭhita*- 'steadfast in the Law' of Kujula Kadphises occurs in fuller form in the legend of a later issue, namely *sacadhramaṭhita*- < *satyadharmasṭhita*- 'steadfast in the true Law'. Contrary to earlier assumptions, which regarded Kujula Kadphises as Buddhist on the basis of this epithet, it is now clear from the wording of a Mathura inscription,<sup>7</sup> in which Huvishka bears the same epithet *satyadharmas-*

6. Pugachenkova, 1966, p. 187.

7. Lüders, 1961, pp. 138 et seq.

*thita*, that the kingdom was conferred upon him by Śarva and Ścaṃḍavira (*Caṇḍavīra*), that is, he was a devotee of Śiva. It is striking to see that Kujula Kadphises has already adopted the worship of Śiva and the use of Kharoṣṭhī script at such an early date. We must not, however, forget that the spread of Indian religious ideas and cults to the north-west as well as the use of Gāndhārī Prakrit and Kharoṣṭhī script had already begun under the Graeco-Bactrians. The Indo-Greeks from the time of Apollodotus I, Antimachus and Menander had regularly struck coins with Gāndhārī Prakrit legends and the later Eucratides had used the city-goddess of Kāpiśa as a reverse coin type.

The spread of Indian religions, scripts and languages to Bactria presupposes the migration there of Indian merchants and craftsmen. They were attracted by the quickly developing new Graeco-Bactrian cities and the favourable prospects of long-distance trade opened up by the Greek kingdom of Bactria and later by the Kushans. If the importance of trade between India and Pontus was already clear to Antiochus I, the decisive significance of trade between India and China through Central Asia must have been even clearer for the Graeco-Bactrian and Kushan rulers. This explains their ambition to acquire and control the Silk Route. According to the report of Aristobulos (quoted by Strabo XI.7.3), the Oxus river was navigable and many Indian goods were transported on it as far as the Hyrcanian Sea, and from there to Albania and the Pontic region. The importance of Indian trade down the Oxus river and the activity of Indian merchants and craftsmen along this important trading route gave the Kushan *yabghus* strong reason to prefer Indian religious worship and to use Indian scripts and languages. The share of Indian merchants was also important in the silk trade between India and China, which began to flourish from just this period. From the first century B.C., corporations of Indian merchants were formed in Xumḍān, the Chinese capital, clear evidence of the close trading relations between these two great and rich nations. When the Kushans conquered Transoxania they became masters of the initial section of the Silk Route, and it was almost a historical necessity that Kujula Kadphises, the founder of the Kushan Empire, began to prefer the cult of Śiva. None the less, Greek religious ideas and Greek religious iconography remained important for the Kushan dynasty. When, after his victories, Kujula Kadphises assumed the title *mahārāja rājatirāja* (Great King, King of Kings) in his coin legends, he used the winged Nike as the reverse type of the issue.

## Religious life under Vima Kadphises

At the time when Vima Kadphises became Kushan emperor, religious life can be characterized by two interesting features. One is the adoption of the forms of Greek religious art and the Greek iconographic interpretation of Kushan divinities. It is very likely that the Kushan gods Ohromazdo, Vanindo, Mihro and

Oṛlagno lie behind the Greek iconographical garb of Zeus, Nike, Mithra and Heracles – further evidence for the strong influence of Greek religious ideas and forms before the rise of the Great Kushans. The other striking feature is the strong orientation towards Indian religions and the worship of Śiva in particular. It is, therefore, not surprising that the cult of Śiva became even more prominent under Vima Kadphises, who conquered considerable territories in India. His coinage gives clear evidence of this, as Śiva, or Śiva with Nandi, appears as the reverse type of all his issues.

In some coin legends Vima has the epithet *maheśvara*, which, being a typical name of Śiva, can hardly be taken in the sense of ‘the great lord’ and refer to Vima himself; but as Kharoṣṭhī script did not indicate long vowels, it can more probably be interpreted as *māheśvara* ‘worshipper of Śiva’. Archaeological and epigraphic finds also attest the leaning of Vima towards the cult of Śiva. At Dilberjin, the temple of the Dioscuri, built in Graeco-Bactrian times, was transformed by Vima Kadphises into a sanctuary of Śiva and decorated with a wall-painting representing Śiva and Parvatī (See Chapter 15, Fig. 9). According to the fragmentary Bactrian inscription D 1 (see Chapter 17), Vima Kadphises probably had the wall-painting of Oēṣo (Śiva) prepared, and gave orders that the priest of the stronghold and the master of the hunt should take care of the sanctuary and cult. It is clear from the long Bactrian inscription D 2 (see Chapter 17) that Vima Kadphises probably had craftsmen brought from Ujjayinī (modern Ujjain) to construct a water conduit to the sanctuary of Śiva. According to the Bactrian inscription DN 1, Vima Kadphises again ordered the town Andēzo (Lrapho = Qunduz) to retain the tax it collected and use it for the sanctuary and the warlike divinity (see Chapter 17). The fragmentary Brāhmī inscription on the pedestal of a statue from Tōkrī Tīlā, near Mat, speaks more precisely about the relation between the god Śiva and the Kushan king: . . . *satyadharmasthit-asyananayatsarvaścaṃḍavīrātisṛṣṭarājyasya* . . . ‘who is steadfast in the true Law, on whom, on account of his devotion, the kingdom was conferred by Sarva and Ścaṃḍavira’.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the Kushan king ascribed his rise to power to Sarva (= Śiva) and Caṇḍavīra (who may be the same god as Candīśvara, the god of the Mahākāla temple at Ujjain, probably a special form of Śiva). Because the circle of gods around Śiva have a warlike character, it is very likely that the phrase *iazado i karisaro* ‘the warlike divinity’ also denoted Śiva.

This devotion of Vima Kadphises to Śiva could have both personal and political reasons. The great commander and conqueror may himself have felt an attraction towards the warlike god Śiva and the war-gods in his ambience. It is noteworthy that Vima bears the epithet *mahozinigo* ‘protégé of the moon [god]’ in his inscription DN 1 (see Chapter 17), and it seems that originally the divine patron of the Kushan dynasty was the ancient Iranian moon god. In view

8. Lüders, 1961, pp. 140 et seq.

of the close connection between Śiva and the moon, dynastic religious ideas may have also suggested to Vima the choice of Śiva as his divine patron. In political terms, both in the preparations for his Indian campaign and during the campaign itself Vima Kadphises may have received valuable support from groups of the Indian population who worshipped Śiva. A number of Indian settlements already existed on the territory of eastern Iran at the time, and the Parthian ostraca from Nisa show that there was an Indian settlement called Hindu-gān in the neighbourhood of the ancient Parthian capital. Consequently the support of the Indian population of his kingdom may have been important for Vima both before and during his Indian campaign. The emergence of Caṇḍavīra/Candīśvara, the god of the Mahākāla temple at Ujjain, among the divine patrons of Vima probably bears witness to the assistance he received from the priesthood of Śiva there. The mention of 'Ujjayinī' in his inscription D2 reflects the importance of relations with Ujjain and its cult of Śiva, maintained by Vima Kadphises even after his Indian campaign.

A peculiar feature of the iconography of Śiva adopted for the reverse on coins of Vima Kadphises permits us to think of some local factors in the spread of the cult. On some of Vima's coins Śiva is shown with tongues of flame rising from his head, a phenomenon otherwise unknown in Śiva iconography. The male figure with five-rayed head, on the reverse of the early issues of the Mithra kings of Pañcāla, is clearly different and cannot have been a model for the flaming-head Śiva on coins of Vima Kadphises. In Indian mythology, it is the god Yama who was imagined with flaming hair. Moreover, it should be remembered that Yama (*Imrā* < *Yama rājā*) is the principal god of the Kafir tribes. We must therefore reckon with the possibility that the iconography of Śiva was also influenced by local religious ideas, belonging originally to Yama, worshipped by the local Kafirs, and that this syncretism also contributed to the spread of his cult.

The Kushan kings derived their royal power from divine patrons, and so they were charismatic kings, human incarnations of divine might and power. As a consequence of their charisma, they also became objects of divine worship in dynastic sanctuaries. Vima Kadphises began the construction of two such centres of the royal cult, one at Mat, near Mathura, the other in Surkh Kotal. The construction of the sanctuary<sup>9</sup> at Mat was executed by Humaṣpala, the *baganapati* (curator of the temple), according to the record incised between the feet of a colossal seated figure of Vima Kadphises, whose name appears in the form Vema Takpisa (earlier reading, Vema Taksuma). The same form of his name also occurs in the Bactrian inscription DH 1 (Ooēmo Takpiso). Beside the temple, a garden, a tank, a well, an assembly hall and a gateway were constructed. In Surkh Kotal, however, only the preparatory work began during the reign of Vima. According to the unfinished inscription (SK 2, see Chapter 17),

9. Called *devakula* in the building inscription; see Lüders, 1961, p. 135.



he had a canal dug there to assure the water supply for building operations, which were probably continued and finished by his successor Kanishka.

## The religious policy of Kanishka I

The accession of Kanishka marked essential changes in the religious life of the Kushan kingdom. While in the interest of his Indian conquest, Vima Kadphises had given preference to the worship of Śiva in his religious policy, his successor Kanishka put Bactria and its Iranian religious cults at the centre of his religious policy. He continued and finished building the dynastic sanctuary at Surkh Kotal. If the restoration of the fragmentary building inscription (monumental wall inscription SK 1) is correct, the construction of the stronghold and the great staircase as well as Temple A was finished in four years. The sanctuary bore the name 'Kanishka Oanindo-sanctuary' but according to the Bactrian inscriptions SK 4A, 4B, 4M this name was only given later, in Year 31, when the sanctuary was renovated and enlarged (see Chapter 17). So Temple A may originally have been used for the cult of the dynastic divinities on the reverse of his first coin issues, namely, Helios, Selene, Hephaistos and Nanaia.

While the first issues minted by Kanishka still bore Greek legends, they were subsequently replaced by Bactrian legends. Correspondingly, instead of the Greek gods the Iranian Mioro, Mao, Aθšo and Nana appeared.

In this phenomenon we do not have a change in the religious cult of the Kushan royal court, merely the omission of the Greek interpretation of their dynastic gods. The representation of Mioro, Mao, Aθšo and Nana is identical with the earlier forms of Helios, Selene, Hephaistos and Artemis Nanaia. The coincidence is particularly striking in the case of Selene, who appears as a male divinity, with the iconography of the Greek moon goddess applied to the male Iranian moon god. Obviously, the Kushan Helios, Selene, Hephaistos and Nanaia do not represent the Greek deities Helios, Selene, Hephaistos and Nanaia, but are the Iranian gods Mihro, Maho, Aθšo and Nana, divine patrons of the Kushan dynasty, who appeared according to the *interpretatio Graeca* bearing Greek divine names and in Greek iconography.

The first of them, Mihro, was already represented at Khalchayan as patron god of the first Kushan *yabghu*, Sanab. On the basis of the epithet *mahozinigo*, borne by Vima Kadphises in the Bactrian inscription DN 1 'protégé of the moon god', Maho also belonged to the group of the Kushan dynastic deities. As concerns Aθšo-Hephaistos, probably the Kushans also had their dynastic fire as did the Arsacids and Sasanians, and this was placed on the platform of Temple A at Surkh Kotal. Possibly the dynastic fire cult was taken over by the Kushans from the Arsacids in the same manner as the title 'King of Kings'.<sup>10</sup>

10. Harmatta, 1965, p. 171.

The origin of Nana worship points in the same direction. According to the evidence of the Parthian ostraca from Nisa, a Nana sanctuary also existed in the ancient Parthian capital and royal residence. Very probably the cult of Nana arrived from Parthia. The evidence for the Nana sanctuary at Nisa is scanty and does not throw any direct light on the relation of the Nana cult to the Arsacid dynasty, but the existence of a Nana sanctuary in the Parthian royal residence makes it likely that Nana was also one of the divine patrons of the Arsacid dynasty. West Iranian religious influence can be seen among the Saka tribes who borrowed some Zoroastrian terms from the Parthians (e.g. *den* 'religion', *ar̥ta* < Old Iranian *arθya-*, Avestan *ašya-* 'pious', *ādu-* < Old Iranian *artavan-*, Avestan *ašavan-*). The phonetic form of these terms clearly supports a borrowing from Parthian and excludes a local 'Bactrian' origin.

The emergence of the names, Mioro, Mao, Aθšo and Nana, instead of the corresponding Greek names, Helios, Selene, Hephaistos, Nanaia, on the reverse of the coins struck by Kanishka was made possible by the creation of the Bactrian writing system based on the Greek alphabet during the reign of Vima Kadphises. The possibility of writing Bactrian enabled Kanishka to replace Greek with Bactrian legends on the coins, and to set up inscriptions written in Bactrian. As a consequence of this development, the Iranian gods removed the Greek-language disguise and appeared with their Iranian names. Even the names of the genuine Greek gods became slightly Bactrianized, the Greek word-ending being replaced by a Bactrian one.

While the development of a Bactrian script made it possible to replace Greek with Iranian names, it alone cannot explain the preference given by Kanishka and his successors to the Iranian divinities. Because the worship of the Iranian gods prevailed first in the territory of Bactria, the predominance of the Bactrian cults in the religious policy of Kanishka I also indicates the increased interest of the Kushan king in the western part of his empire – the home territory of Bactria. Behind this new orientation, we can note the strengthening of the Parthian kingdom during the second century A.D. when Parthia became a permanent threat to the Kushans.

None the less, the importance of India and the Indian religions, especially the worship of Śiva, remained unchanged. Kanishka has a reverse type representing Śiva with the name Oēšo < Old Indian *Vṛṣa* > Prakrit *Veṣa*, identifying the god by an inscription for the first time. If Mioro, Mao, Aθšo and Nana were the ancient divine patrons of the Kushan dynasty, then Śiva had belonged to the same group of gods since the reign of Vima Kadphises. Consequently, reverse types of the coin issues of Kanishka represent primarily the dynastic pantheon of the Kushan king, to the worship of which the sanctuary of Surkh Kotal was dedicated.

## Religious life under the 'triple' kingship

The successor of Kanishka seems to have been his son Vāsishka, who, according to the inscription of Kamra, was the great-grandson of Kujula Kadphises and ruled jointly together with his first-born son, Kanishka II. At the same time, on the basis of a fragmentary inscription from Mathura,<sup>11</sup> we can state that the grandfather of Huvishka was Vima Kadphises. If, therefore, Kanishka I was the son of Vima and grandson of Kujula Kadphises, Vāsishka and Huvishka must have been brothers. According to the inscription of Kamra, both Vāsishka and Kanishka II were ruling in Year 30 of the era.

The Bactrian inscription of Ayrtaṃ again attests the rule of Huvishka in Year 30, and on the basis of the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* it could be argued that Hushka, Jushka and Kanishka all ruled at the same time. It seems, therefore, that Kanishka I was followed by his son Vāsishka who took his first-born son, Kanishka II, and his brother Huvishka as co-rulers. Taking into consideration that no coin issue of Vāsishka is known so far in the dynasty of the Great Kushans, apparently it was Kanishka II who minted coins and not his father Vāsishka. The coin issues bearing the name of Kanishka can possibly be divided between Kanishka I and Kanishka II. In fact, we can observe some striking changes in the Kushan pantheon,<sup>12</sup> represented on the coin reverses, which make it possible to attribute coins belonging to the third emission, from section A 2 on<sup>13</sup> to Kanishka II, who, on his coins, wears a hat-like crown with a broad, richly decorated brim.

On the reverses of these coin issues ascribed to Kanishka II, there appear a series of divinities, who did not play any part earlier in the Kushan coinage. They are Pharro, Manaobago, Ardoxšo, Boddo, Ořlagno/Ořlagno, Lroaspo, Mozdooano. Beside these deities, the ancient divine patrons of the Kushan dynasty such as Mioro, Mao, Nana and Oēšo are also represented. There must have been some reason for the emergence of new gods in the pantheon of the Kushan coins. Kanishka II, the son of Vāsishka, bearing the titles *mahārāja rājatirāja devaputra kaisara* (Great King, King of Kings, Son of God, Caesar) in the Ara inscription, is an enigmatic figure. His personality, however, appears in a new light if we recognize him as Chen-t'an Ki-ni-ch'a (\*Candana Kanishka) of the Buddhist work *Śrīdharmapīṭakanidānasūtra*, according to which King Candana Kanishka won a great victory over the King of Pāṭaliputra and the Parthian king. Candana Kanishka is also mentioned by the name of Sandanes in the *Periplus* (Chapter 52) as a mighty ruler who conquered the most important harbours on the western shore of India south of Barygaza (Broach). It follows

11. Cf. Lüders, 1961, pp. 138 et seq.

12. 'Zone of actuality'; see Göbl, 1983, pp. 85, 94.

13. According to the system elaborated by Göbl; *ibid.*, pp. 85–7.

that the Buddhist legends woven around the figure of Kanishka belong not to Kanishka I but to his grandson, Kanishka II.

Kanishka II clearly recognized the importance of Buddhism in his kingdom. There were some important Buddhist centres in Bactria, at Termez and Ayrtaṃ, where missionary work of both the Mahāsāṅghika and the Sarvāstivāda schools was active. Kanishka II was, without doubt, a great protector of Buddhism and founded monasteries and built stupas according to the Buddhist tradition. From the viewpoint of the history of Buddhism, however, his most important action was to convene the Buddhist synod in Kashmir, a decisive turning-point in the life of the Buddhist schools. According to tradition, this synod of the Sarvāstivāda school compiled the *Jñānaprasthānam* and entrusted Aśvaghoṣa, the famous poet, with providing for the correct language form of the commentary written by Kātyāyana. Essentially, his charge was to rewrite the Buddhist works in Sanskrit. Earlier both the Mahāsāṅghika and the Sarvāstivāda schools equally used Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī to write Gāndhārī Prakrit. After the synod of Kashmir, however, as a consequence of the literary activity of Aśvaghoṣa, the Sarvāstivāda preferred Sanskrit and Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit written in Brāhmī script to Gāndhārī Prakrit written in Kharoṣṭhī script. So the Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit became the literary language of Buddhism, and in this development the role of Kanishka II was decisive. It was not by chance that around his figure a cycle of Buddhist legends came into being.

None the less, he did not neglect other religions and cults. On the reverse types of coins beside Boddo (Buddha) we find other Iranian divinities both Zoroastrian and local. Among them Manao Bago probably represents the Bactrian name for Avestan Vohu Manah (Good Mind, Wisdom) which was in the possession of *xšaθra-* 'might, kingdom'; he bestows *xšaθra-* for the righteousness of man; and increased it to triumph over the Druj and enlarge the realm of Ahura Mazda. Thus the religious ideas belonging to the figure of Vohu Manah/Manao Bago excellently fitted Kushan royal ideology in the context of Kanishka's victories and conquests. The function of Vohu Manah among the Amesha Spentas, and his relationship to Ahura Mazda, helped to introduce the principal god of Zoroastrianism himself into the ambience of the divine patrons of the Kushan king. *Mazdāh vana* represents 'the victorious [Ahura] Mazda' who triumphs over the Druj, like the Kushan king over his enemies. Of the local divinities Ardoxšo, Orlagno and Lroaspo were represented on the coin reverses of Kanishka II. Lroaspo was an ancient pre-Zoroastrian god ensuring the health of the horses of the Iranian equestrian nomads. He was also worshipped among the north-western Iranian equestrian nomadic tribes and his name was preserved in the form of the hydronym Dyrapses, reflecting the Alanian outcome *\*Druvāfsa-* of Old Iranian *\*Druvāspa-*. *Lruvāspa* occurring on the Kushan coins may represent the Bactrian development of *Druvāspa*. Obviously, the Bactrians, who had an excellent cavalry and a famous race of horses, worshipped *\*Druvāspa-* > *Lruvāspa-* since their immigration to Bactria.

Ořlagno/Ořlagno was an ancient Indo-Iranian divinity, a warrior god whose worship was broadly spread among both the western and the eastern Iranians. The name Ořlagno represents a local, Eastern Iranian development of Old Iranian \*Vr̥θrayna-, namely, the consonant cluster -r̥θ- developed into -r̥- or -s-. Thus, even though this warrior god is well known in the *Avesta*, he was included in the Kushan pantheon not as a Zoroastrian but as a local deity, who was popular among the eastern Iranian warriors with the bird Vāragna on his helmet, armed with a spear and long sword.

Ardoxšo was also a local divinity, as is clearly shown by the Manichaean Persian text M 2, which relates the encounter of the Apostle Mār Ammo with *bg'rd w'xs* (*Bay Ard* spirit) who is named *wymndb'n 'y hwr's'n* 'Khorasan's frontier guard'. The local character of Ardoxšo is confirmed by the place-name Bagarda, mentioned by Ptolemy (VI.18.5) in the description of the Paropamisadae. Ardoxšo can be identified with the Avestan goddess Ardvi<sup>14</sup> who, according to the *Ardvīsūr Yašt*, bestows the highest royal power over all lands to her worshippers. Thus the figure of Ardoxšo also fitted the Kushan royal ideology and enjoyed great popularity among the eastern Iranian population. From the iconographic view-point Ardoxšo was identified with the Hellenistic Tyche, holding a cornucopia.

Lastly, Pharro, god of the royal splendour and glory, was probably of Parthian origin. Old Persian *farnah*-, corresponding to Avestan *hvarmah*- 'royal splendour', was borrowed from Median *farnah*- which may perhaps go back to a Scythian \**farnah*- < \**hvarnah*-.<sup>15</sup> In any case \**farnah*- > *farr* became a firm element of Arsacid royal ideology. The adoption of Pharro in the Kushan pantheon may have been connected with the idea seen in the *Kārnāmak-i Artaxšīr-i Pāpakān*, according to which *farr* 'royal glory' always abandoned the defeated king and went over to the triumphant one. On the basis of this idea it was a natural step on the part of Kanishka II to introduce the cult of the royal glory into the religious life of the court, because it left the Parthian king Vologases, who was defeated by Kanishka and went over to the conqueror.

An important moment in the religious activity of Kanishka II was the restoration of the dynastic sanctuary at Surkh Kotal. The renewal or introduction of the cult of the goddess Oanindo (Victory) was obviously connected with his great victory over the Parthian king. He sent an officer, Nokonzoko by name, to the sanctuary in Year 31 (A.D. 165). By digging a well, Nokonzoko ensured the water supply of the stronghold and the sanctuary, and leading back the statues of the gods, renewed the cult of the dynastic divinities there.

The coinage of Huvishka also provides rich evidence for the religions and cults of the kingdom. The question must be raised, however: What chronological relationship can be established between the coinage of Kanishka II and that

14. Harmatta, 1960, pp. 198 et seq.

15. Lecoq, 1987, p. 678.

of Huvishka? On the basis of the epigraphic sources it is clear that the religious activity of the two kings, being co-rulers for at least a decade, continued in parallel. The religious activity of Huvishka was particularly intensive. According to the Bactrian inscription of Ayrtam (see Chapter 17), in Year 30 (A.D. 164), he sent his officer Šodila as treasurer to the sanctuary there and had a Pharro-Ardoxšo image prepared and set up in the stronghold. Later, when the river changed its course and the sanctuary became waterless, he had the divinities and their cult transferred to another place. Then, by his officer Šodila, he had a well and a water-conduit dug, and having ensured the water supply, he resettled the cult of Pharro and Ardoxšo into the sanctuary of Ayrtam. These events may be dated between Years 30 and 40 (i.e. A.D. 164 to 174).

Similar activity by Huvishka can be seen at Mathura. The dynastic sanctuary of the Kushan kings built by Vima Kadphises was in a ruinous state when Huvishka sent a great general (*mahādaṇḍanāyaka*), who had the sanctuary restored and set up a statue of Huvishka in the *devakula*, ensuring regular hospitality for the Brahmans in the assembly hall belonging to the sanctuary. Even though the date of the inscription is not preserved or it was not dated, the restoration work can be dated to a later period, perhaps after Year 40, when Huvishka was already bearing the title *rājatirāja* (King of Kings).

The parallel rule of Kanishka II and Huvishka also raises the question of whether they minted coins in parallel. If this was the case, it would be easy to explain why Huvishka used the device of Kanishka II on his first issues. Being the brother of Vāsishka, Huvishka may have been substantially older than Kanishka II, and even though he apparently outlived him, it is improbable that he would have still been alive up to around Year 60. We probably have to reckon with two Huvishkas, father and son, and to divide the coinage between them. One possibility for the division lies in the remarkable change in the Kushan pantheon represented in Huvishka's reverse types.<sup>16</sup>

It is very likely that the minting of Huvishka I began in parallel with that of Kanishka II. At that time, the mints of Huvishka employed the device of Kanishka II and used as reverse types the same divine patrons of the dynasty, namely, Miīro, Pharro, Mao, Nanašao and Oēšo with Manao Bago and Ardoxšo who also occur. Mozdooano is missing from the divinities represented on the coin reverses. Instead of him, we find Serapis, the supreme deity of the Alexandrian pantheon whose name appears in the Bactrianized form of Sarapo. His emergence seems to indicate the orientation of Huvishka towards Roman Egypt, an important market for the wares imported from or through the Kushan Empire. Also omitted is the ancient Iranian war god Ořlagno, whose place and function are occupied by a group of Indian war gods, Skando (Old Indian Skanda), Komaro (Old Indian Kumāra), Maaseno (Old Indian Mahāsena), Bizago (Old Indian Viśākha), and even Ommo (Old Indian Umā), the

16. Göbl, 1983, p. 87.



consort of Śiva. Their use as reverse types of Huvishka I is clear evidence for the new trends in religious policy of the Kushan king, which was possibly influenced by enlisting Indian warriors into the Kushan army during the campaign against Pāṭaliputra.

Also interesting is the omission of Buddha from the reverse types of Huvishka. This is surprising because according to the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*, Huvishka supported Buddhism, and the existence at Mathura of 'the monastery of the Great King, the King of Kings, the Son of God, Huvishka'<sup>17</sup> proves beyond doubt that the literary evidence corresponded with reality. The omission of Buddha from the coin types showing the divine helpers of the Kushan king requires an explanation. The problem is closely connected with the function and meaning of the gods portrayed on the coins. They could indicate worship by the kings of the divinities represented, or protection by the gods that the king worshipped. Sometimes they may refer to pious gifts, or represent statues set up in a sanctuary, like the statue of Ardoxšo in Huvishka's issue<sup>18</sup> which had been set up in a Buddhist sanctuary. This indicates the king's favour to Buddhism, and the tendency of Buddhism to absorb local cults. The omission of Buddha from his pantheon of reverse types did not in itself mean that Huvishka neglected Buddhism, because his royal favour is seen in support of the local cults absorbed by Buddhism.

## New trends in the second phase of Huvishka

The second period of the coinage of Huvishka (perhaps Huvishka II) reveals some remarkable new trends. Beside the ancient divine patrons of the dynasty – Miiro, Mao, Nana, Oēšo, Aθšo 'the royal fire' and Pharro 'the royal splendour' – further Zoroastrian and local deities appeared. Among the Zoroastrian divinities, the emergence of Ooromozdo, the supreme god, is important. While *Mazdo oano* 'Mazda the victorious' represented the Bactrian form of the supreme god of Zoroastrianism in the effigy of a Kushan horseman, the phonetic form of the name Ohromozdo clearly points to western Zoroastrianism. The other Zoroastrian deities – Šaorēoro 'best royal power', Ašaeixšo 'best righteousness' (= Avestan *Xšaθrām vairīm* and Avestan *Aša vahišta*), *Rišto/Rišti* 'uprightness' (= Avestan *Aršti/Arštāt*)<sup>19</sup> – represent important aspects of royal ideology. Among them Šaorēoro seems to be again of west Iranian origin, that is, he was adopted into the Kushan pantheon from western Zoroastrianism. On the contrary, Ašaeixšo and Rišti are apparently local developments of Avestan *Aša Vahišta* and *Aršti*. Probably, the enigmatic legend *Anabod* also belongs to

17. Lüders, 1961, p. 68.

18. Harmatta, 1986, p. 136.

19. Grenet, 1987, p. 42.

the ambience of Ohromozdo. In view of the fact that the name ends with a consonant while in Bactrian each word has a final vowel, the spelling 'Auabod' must represent an abridged form. Very likely the full form of the name can be restored as \**Ahu budano* 'supreme lord of the creatures' (< Old Iranian \**Ahu būtanām*), being a Bactrian name for Mithra, parallel to his Avestan designation *ahu ratušča gaēthanam* 'supreme lord and judge of the living being'. Together with the legend *Ahubud(ano)* the effigy of Mithra appears on the coin, i.e. iconography and legend are in harmony with each other.

The other remarkable tendency is the emergence of the local divinities on coin reverses. Beside Lroaspo, already introduced by Kanishka II, Oaxšo and Iamšo now appear. Oaxšo was the well-known eastern Iranian god of waters and rivers, in particular the deity of the Oxus river. His sanctuary was discovered at Takht-i Sangin, on the northern bank of the Amu Darya. His popularity and importance are best illustrated by the inscription on a seal: *Oaxšo i iogo bayo* 'Oaxšo is the only god'. *Iamšo* may again be identified with *Imrā* (< *Yama rājā*), the supreme god of the Kafiri (or Nuristani) tribes.<sup>20</sup> The form possibly reflects a popular dialect variant of the Bactrian \**Iamo šao*. The emergence of the goddess Oanindo (Victory) on the coins of Huvishka II may have completed the group of divine patrons of the dynasty and can perhaps be brought into connection with the renewal of the Oanindo sanctuary at Surkh Kotal.

In religious policy, as reflected in his coinage, the efforts of Huvishka were obviously intended to enlarge the social basis of his rule by religious ideology, that supported all the local cults and Bactrian Zoroastrianism among the population of eastern Iran. The divine figures on Kushan coin reverses reflect the religious ideas and policy of the Kushan kings, but indirectly they also mirror the general trends of religious life – a very complex phenomenon under the Great Kushans, as we see at Mathura.

In the Kushan period there were numerous sanctuaries of different cults in the environs of Mathura. The Buddhists had about fifteen monasteries, three sanctuaries and numerous stupas; the Jains had three temples, and several stupas, there were three nāga shrines, the sanctuary of the yakṣa Mānibhadra and the royal dynastic sanctuary of the Great Kushans. From the inscriptions, we can follow the fortunes of particular sanctuaries and monasteries. Different Buddhist schools, the Sarvāstivādins, the Mahāsāṅghikas, the Samitiyas and the Mahopadeśakas, proclaimed their teaching at the same time. The golden age of Mathura seems to have been the time of Huvishka, from which the greatest number of dedicatory inscriptions are preserved. Religious life in Mathura was characterized by the co-existence of the great religions and their cults, mutually influencing and enriching each other.

20. Grenet, 1984, p. 260.

## Syncretism and absorption

In spite of the scanty evidence, fragmentary in many respects, we can draw some general conclusions about religious life throughout the territory of the Kushans. It was highly developed and differentiated. The religious movements of India – Śivaism, Vishnuism, Jainism and Buddhism with their different schools – penetrated Central Asia, as did Indian merchants when Kushan rule facilitated long-distance international trade. In eastern Iran the Indian religions met the Greek divinities, Zoroastrianism and many local pre-Zoroastrian forms of worship, and encountered the ancient Iranian religious ideas of the northern Iranian equestrian nomads. The Kushan kings selected for themselves from this immense variety those religious elements, ideas and forms of cults which fitted their ancient religious traditions and strengthened the religious ideology of their royal power. So the 'Kushan pantheon' appearing on the coins represents only a selection of the religious cults of their empire.

None the less, the Kushan kings were well aware of the current trends in religious life and followed them. The most important was syncretism. The great religions influenced one another and began slowly to absorb the local cults. In Bactria the syncretic cult of Śiva achieved great success; and on the coins of Bazodeo (Vāsudeva), the last Great Kushan king, Śiva was the sole divinity used, a figure that apparently combined Greek, Iranian and non-Śivaite Indian elements.

In eastern Bactria and Gandhāra the worship of Ardoxšo became predominant, absorbing some features of the local yakṣī cults, of the worship of Lakṣmī and other minor Indian female divinities with elements of the Hellenistic Tyche. She became identified together with Pharro with the Indian couple Kubera and Hāritī, King and Queen of the yakṣas and yakṣīs. Consequently after the Sasanian conquest of Kushanshahr (the western part of the Kushan kingdom), the independent eastern Kushan kings made use of Ardoxšo for the reverse of their coins. The syncretic character of the goddess is clearly shown by the legend *yakṣī* on the coins of Gadahara.<sup>21</sup> But while these two divinities, Śiva and Ardoxšo, became predominant as divine patrons, their figures had absorbed many features of other divinities and had a syncretic character. Syncretism and absorption had finally prevailed in the 'Kushan pantheon'.

21. Cunningham, 1971, No. 10.



## KUSHAN ART\*

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## Kushan art in the north

Art was not uniform in style throughout the vast possessions of the Kushans. Several local centres and distinctive schools have been identified, and the Kushan Empire may be divided into four principal artistic regions: Bactria (Tocharistan in the basin of the Oxus (Amu Darya) and its tributaries); Arachosia and Nagarahāra (Ninhār, now Kabulistan, and the Jalalabad Province of Afghanistan); Gandhāra in Pakistan; and Mathura in India. Bactria is rooted in the Graeco-Bactrian traditions and Mathura in the Indian ones, while both geographically and in terms of history and culture, the second and third regions, each of which had its own independent origins, held the middle ground. Despite regional differences and variations, the fact remains that these areas were politically united under a single state, and this helped the pooling of ideas in various fields of artistic culture, which finally led to the shared stock of themes, images and attitudes that make it possible to view the arts of the Kushans as a single entity.

## TOWN PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURE

The rapid growth of towns in this age went hand in hand with an increasingly vigorous urban culture. This process involved in the first instance the art of building cities. Some settlements, such as Balkh (Bactra),<sup>1</sup> Dilberjin,<sup>2</sup> Termez<sup>3</sup> and Dalverzin-tepe (Fig. 1)<sup>4</sup> in Bactria, sprang up around an original Graeco-

\* See Map 7.

1. Le Berre and Schlumberger, 1964, pp. 70 et seq.

2. Dolgorukov, 1984, pp. 58 et seq.

3. Shishkin, 1941, pp. 123 et seq., Plate 73.

4. Pugachenkova and Rtveladze, 1978, pp. 7 et seq., Plate 2.



FIG. 1. Plan of the fortress of Dalverzin-tepe.



Bactrian core which became the administrative and military centre or citadel. These were generally laid out in the form of a rectangle, which left room for subsequent development and was surrounded by fortress walls and a moat. Later there were improvements in fortification techniques.<sup>5</sup> Citadels were set apart, and city walls were made extremely strong and were flanked by several towers, mostly rectangular but some half-round. Passages and casemates were built into the walls and bowmen's chambers into the towers. Both were pierced by countless arrow-slits, real or blind, while along the parapet lay passage walkways for the defenders and mountings for balistas. The walls were 8–12 m thick at the base and 15–20 m high. Within the walls, the towns consisted of close-packed blocks of buildings in strict alignment with public squares, palaces and temples.

The sheer size of the buildings with which the architects had to deal forced them to devise new structural techniques. In Bactria, building materials were largely of clay such as sun-baked brick and *pakhsa* (a kind of adobe), and most structures were made of these materials. While beamed roofs were employed, pit-head vaults were designed for elongated structures, and, in square buildings, the densely patterned 'closed vault' was devised.

Exterior decoration was sober in the western part of the empire. The smooth stucco of the walls was relieved only by the slit-like window openings and the cornice edges of the flat roofs with their salient beam-ends, occasionally surmounted by a battlemented parapet. But inside, the main rooms were decorated with wall sculptures and paintings. The Bactrian Kushan architectural order figured prominently, in sets of either free-standing columns or wall pilasters. Columns were used in porticos or *aiwans* on the front façade, and in large halls to support the roof beams. They were of wood, but often rested on stone bases the shape of which followed either the Old Iranian tradition of a massive torus on a square plinth,<sup>6</sup> or the Attic style inherited from the Greeks.<sup>7</sup> The pilasters were made of clay, stone or gypsum, and their capitals were variants of the Corinthian order, generally squat in proportion and adorned with two or three rows of heavy acanthus leaves. There were, however, different types for which the term 'composite' might be more apt. In Buddhist buildings, the figure of a Bodhisattva or a gandharva might nestle among the acanthus leaves of the capitals, as at Surkh Kotal or Termez.<sup>8</sup> In Bactria, the capitals were highly indi-

5. Le Berre and Schlumberger, 1964, Plates 15–18; Pugachenkova and Rtveladze, 1978, pp. 21 et seq.; Pugachenkova, 1979, pp. 47 et seq., 1984, pp. 93 et seq.; Dolgorukov, 1984, pp. 58 et seq.; Schlumberger et al., 1983, p. 185, Plates II, X, XXV; Rtveladze, 1982.

6. Pugachenkova, 1966, p. 132, Plates 29, 79, 1973, Plate 7.

7. Pugachenkova, 1966, Plate 79, 1973, Plate 7, 1976, Plates 72–5; Pugachenkova and Rtveladze, 1978, p. 199, Plate 131; Schlumberger et al., 1983, Plates XX, XXII–XXIV, XXX–XXXIV, LVIII–LX.

8. Schlumberger et al., 1983, Plates LXVI–LXVIII; Pugachenkova, 1979, p. 55.

vidualized; among the acanthus leaves could be seen two lion griffins back-to-back, or a pair of zebu bulls with a fabulous bird-creature clawing at them in between. Such examples can be seen at Termez (Sham-kala) (Fig. 2) and Shahr-i Nau (Fig. 3).<sup>9</sup>

Like the public and religious buildings, the homes of the wealthy followed distinctive architectural designs. Some were patterned on the architectural norms of Bactria established in the previous period, while others revealed new features. The palaces and homes of the urban aristocracy were laid out either with a central hall and vestibule or with a courtyard – the whole being surrounded by a corridor. Accommodation and auxiliary premises, as at Khalchayan, Dalverzin-tepe (Fig. 4) and Dilberjin (Fig. 5),<sup>10</sup> were also provided for. The same concept – a hall with a corridor and possibly outbuildings around it – is typical of temples of the local cults in Kushan Bactria, whether Zoroastrian or



FIG. 2. Fragment of a capital from Termez.

9. Staviskiy, 1981, pp. 125 et seq., Plates 93–4; Dagens, 1960, pp. 38 et seq., 1968, pp. 36 et seq.

10. Pugachenkova, 1966, Plate 23, 1976, p. 91; Pugachenkova and Rtveladze, 1978, Plates 15, 26.

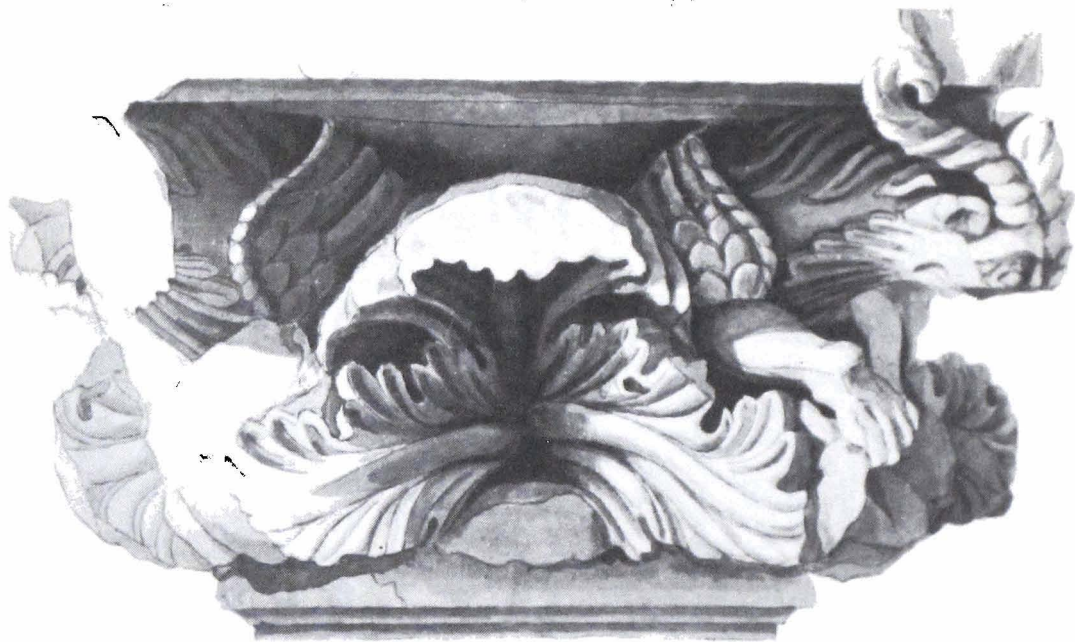


FIG. 3. Stone capital from Shahr-i Nau.

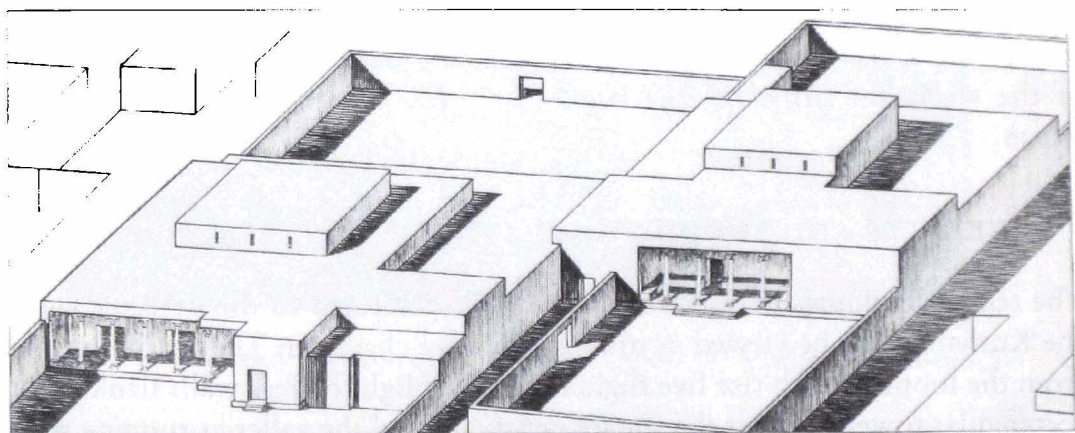


FIG. 4. Dwelling-houses in Dalverzin-tepe (reconstruction).

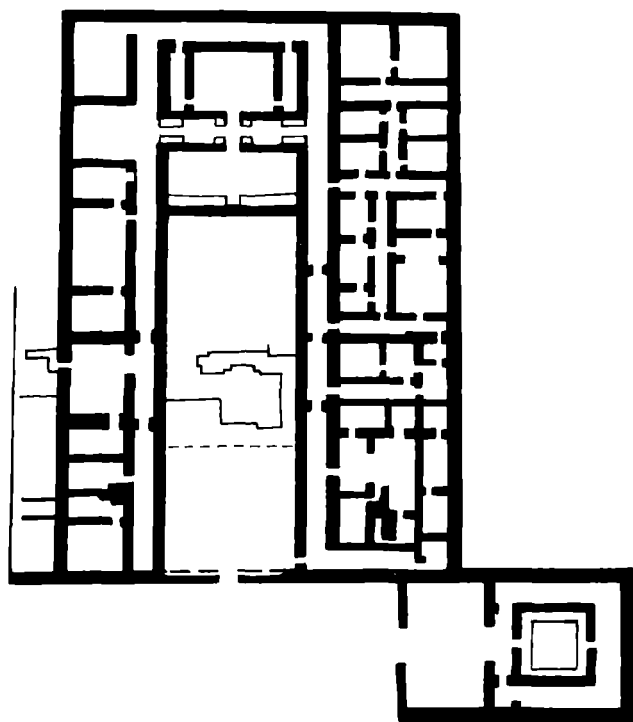


FIG. 5. Plan of a dwelling-house in Dilberjin.

dynastic, as at Takht-i Sangin (Fig. 6),<sup>11</sup> Dilberjin<sup>12</sup> or Surkh Kotal.<sup>13</sup> Externally, these residences, palaces and temples took their shape from the rectangular mass of the central hall or sanctuary. On the façades, nothing broke the smoothness of the walls, the principal one being identified by a colonnaded portico or *aiwan*.

#### TEMPLES AND BUDDHIST BUILDINGS

The temple buildings at Surkh Kotal (Fig. 7), dedicated to the dynastic cult of the Kushans, may be viewed as of representative character. They stand on a hill from the foot of which rise five flights of steps. High fortress walls flanked with rectangular towers protect the square courtyard and the galleries running round it, while in the centre, raised on a platform, looms the chief temple built in Kanishka's times by his official, Nokonzoko. The exterior is surrounded by a colonnaded portico, while the four-columned shrine housing the altar is flanked on three sides by an ambulatory passage. In course of time two further structures of a religious nature were built in the traditional Bactrian manner – a square hall surrounded by a corridor divided by passageways – inside and outside the courtyard.

11. Litvinsky and Pichikyan, 1981, Figs. 2–3.

12. Kruglikova, 1982, Plate 6.

13. Schlumberger et al., 1983, Plates IX, XXXVI–XXXVIII.



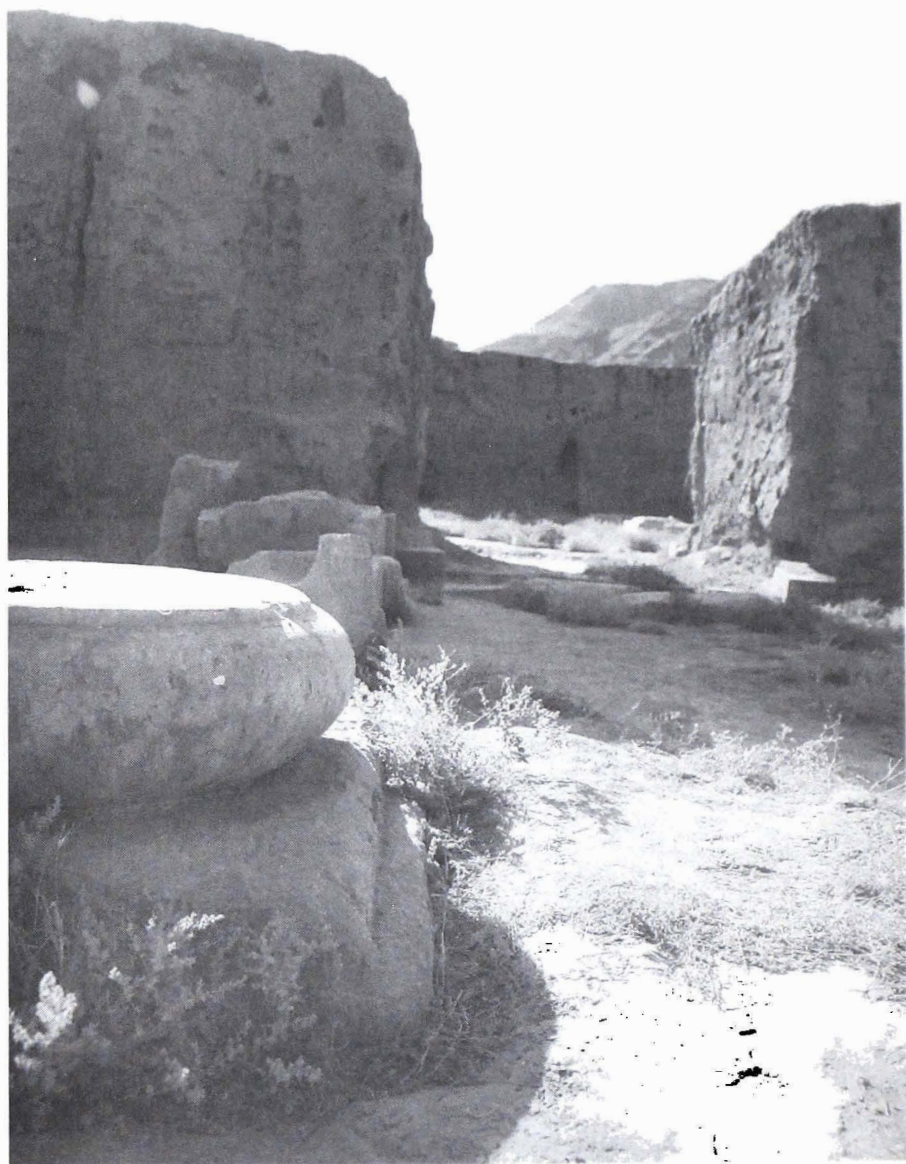


FIG. 6. Colonnaded portico. Takht-i Sangin. (Photo: © Vladimir Terebenin.)

As Buddhism spread from India to the western parts of the Kushan Empire, Buddhist buildings such as monasteries, stupas and shrines sprang up and their remains have been found at Termez (Fig. 8),<sup>14</sup> Ayrtaam,<sup>15</sup> Dilberjin<sup>16</sup> and Surkh Kotal.<sup>17</sup> Architecturally, buildings in these areas are somewhat different from Buddhist structures found in the Indian parts of the empire. They accepted a blending of different architectural settings used for decorative purposes. Wall sculptures and paintings were used as part and parcel of the dec-

14. Staviskiy, 1964–82; Pugachenkova, 1967, pp. 257 et seq.; Al'baum, 1982, pp. 56 et seq.

15. Masson, 1976, pp. 81 et seq.

16. Kruglikova and Pugachenkova, 1977, pp. 61 et seq.

17. Schlumberger et al., 1983, pp. 75 et seq., Plates XLVII–XLVIII, LV.

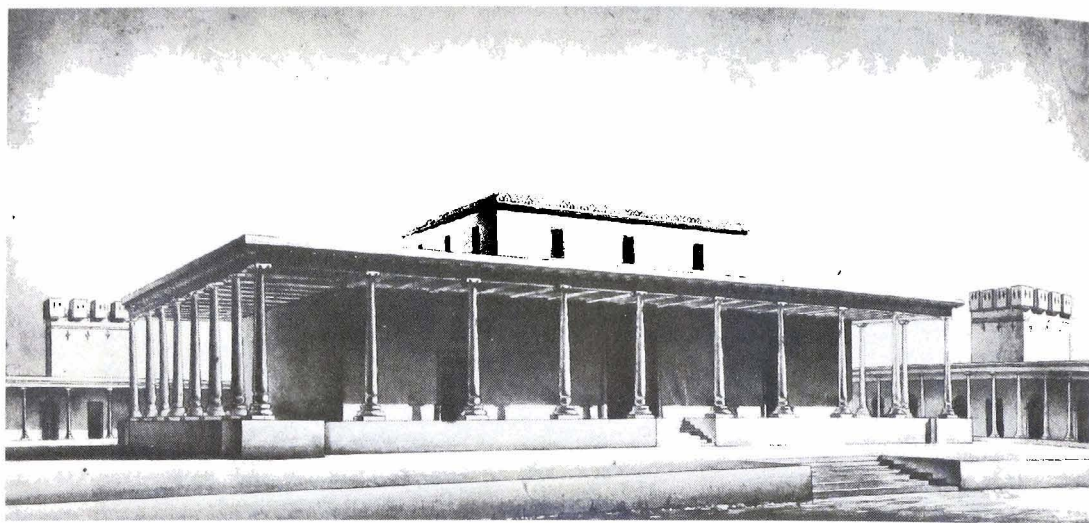


FIG. 7. The sanctuary at Surkh Kotal (reconstruction).

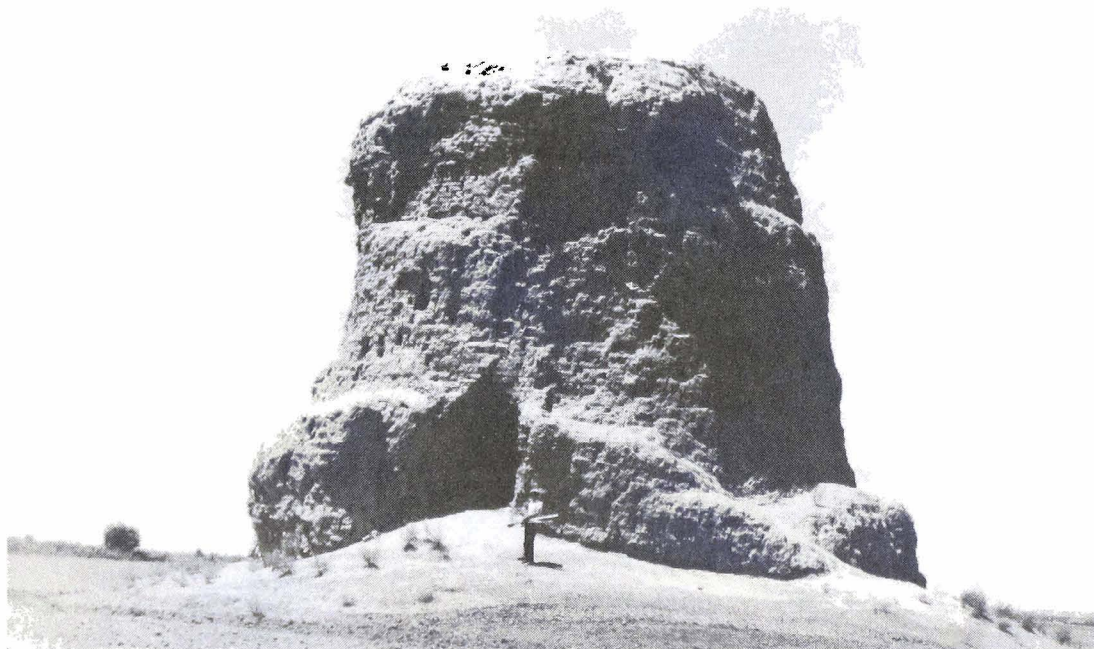


FIG. 8. Buddhist stupa, 'Bastion of Zurmal', at Termez.

oration of *aiwans*, main halls and shrines, while the facing of Buddhist stupas was invariably relieved by representational sculptures.

Murals were constructed in a kind of glue-based tempera laid on a thick rendering of clay with vegetable additives (which was partly responsible for crumbling when the additives decayed) either directly or on a white ground. The colour range was small with a predominance of red, black and white; yellow, blue and green were rarely used. The additional hue of white, however, enabled a whole spectrum of shades to be achieved.



Only fragments of murals have survived but these command attention in respect of the variety of themes and motifs. Paintings of people of different ethnic groups are noticed, along with figures with real animals like the horse, or imaginary ones like the griffin. So are scenes of court life and subjects taken from the religious beliefs and current myths of the time in Bactria. In the Buddhist monasteries of Kara-tepe and Fayaz-tepe at Termez, for example, portraits of the Buddha, a monk and benefactors in typical Kushan costume have been discovered.<sup>18</sup> In Dilberjin, after the Graeco-Bactrian temple of the Dioscuri had been rededicated to Śiva, a scene was added showing Śiva, Parvatī and the bull Nandi (Fig. 9).<sup>19</sup> The temple of the Bactrian goddess in Dalverzin-tepe contained a painting of her seated on a throne, and a representation of an unknown ritual in which a priest and priestesses offer small children for her blessing (Fig. 10).<sup>20</sup> Mural decoration also incorporated ornamental motifs, as the classical palmettos in the temple of the Bactrian goddess at Dalverzin-tepe, reflecting the impact of the Greek tradition. Others clearly represent patterned fabrics: the Khalchayan palace had unconstrained shoots, foliage, clusters of grapes, violets and rounded fruits painted white against a dark red background. Others again consist of purely ornamental latticework interwoven with rings, as in Kara-tepe at Termez.

All these fragments testify to great professional skill on the part of the artists, and probably point to the existence of special guilds of artists in large cities. At the same time, they record traces both of Greek influence and of the gradual assimilation of that influence with the emerging new style. Apart from these paintings, it is the sculpture providing decoration for buildings that commands great admiration. Among the artistic achievements of antiquity, the Central Asian sculptures of the Kushan period now rank among the finest. In Bactria, sculptures were usually of clay, finished in paint or plaster, though some were of white marble-like limestone.

#### MONUMENTAL SCULPTURE

The range of subjects and scenes in Bactrian monumental sculpture was unusually wide and varied, both secular and religious, dynastic and public. Of the dynastic groups, particularly illuminating are the sculptures at Khalchayan dating from the beginning of the Christian era,<sup>21</sup> Dalverzin-tepe from the first century A.D.<sup>22</sup> and Surkh Kotal (second century A.D.).<sup>23</sup> In the palace at Khal-

18. Staviskiy, 1972, Tables IV and V; Al'baum, 1975.

19. Kruglikova, 1974, p. 44, Plate 30.

20. Pugachenkova and Rtveladze, 1978, pp. 79 et seq., Plates 50–5; Pugachenkova, 1979, Plates 194, 196, 199, 200.

21. Pugachenkova, 1971, pp. 153 et seq.

22. Pugachenkova, 1979, pp. 131 et seq., Figs. 123–4.

23. Schlumberger et al., 1983, Plates LVIII–LXXI.

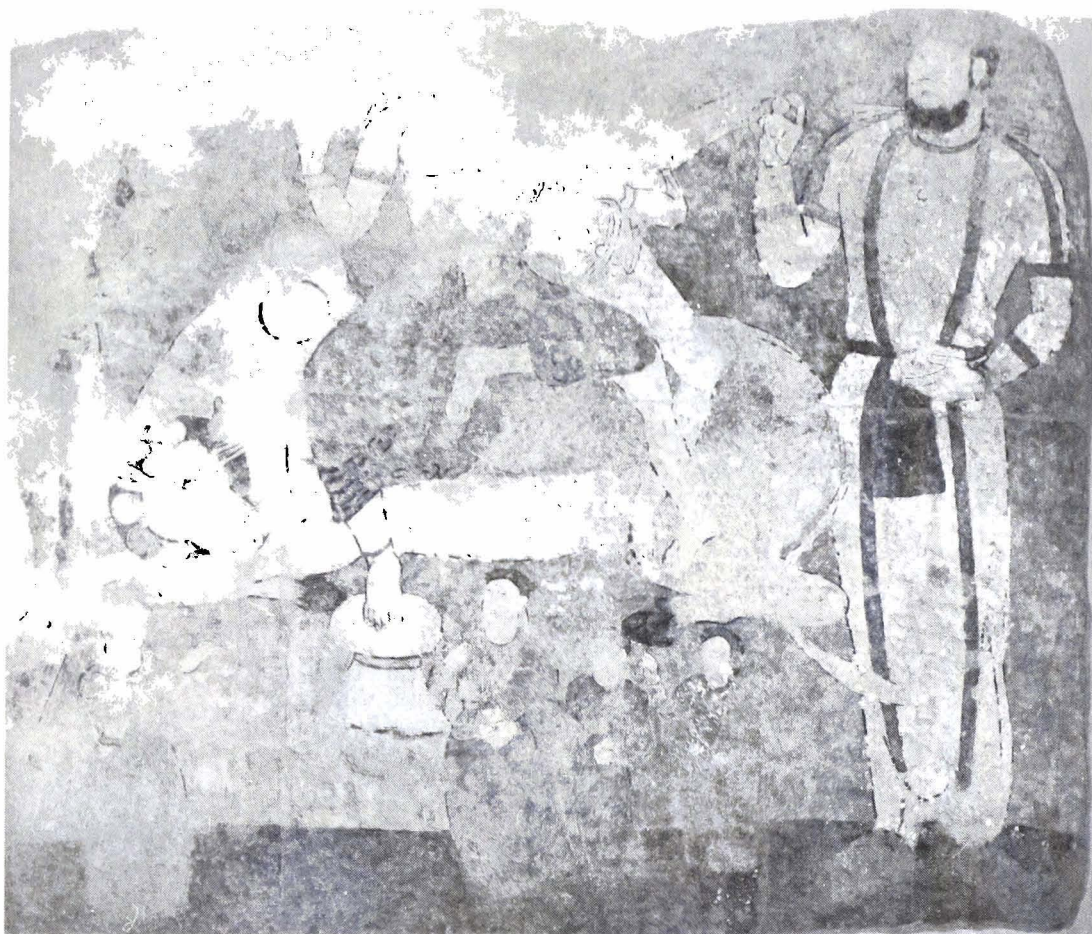


FIG. 9. Śiva, Parvatī and the guard. Painting in the sanctuary of Dilberjin.

chayan, complete scenes were carved around the walls of the main hall and the *aiwan*. In the hall, the centre-piece was a scene of imperial splendour – a Kushan monarch of the lineage of Heraus, seated on a throne with his lady. Above them are Nike and Heracles, and on both sides are men and women of the imperial household. To the right is another dynastic scene – the head of the family shown seated while others stand around in formal attitudes. To the left is a battle scene with mounted heroes in armour and helmets, and lightly armed bowmen shooting as they advance (Figs. 11–14).

All the characters are portrayed in a completely individual manner and are clearly taken from life. Their different ethnic origins are accentuated, Bactrian and Parthian princes appear, and the majority of the figures are supposed to be the Kushan clan of Heraus, the monarch well known from his image on coins. The head compressed at the front and back, the eyes stretching lynx-like to the temples, the straight nose, the finely drawn moustache and sideboards, the straight hair caught up in a fillet or circlet – all these are tribal characteristics of the whole of Heraus' lineage (Fig. 15).

This sculpture was executed in the expressively realistic style that the





FIG. 10. Ritual scene. Fragment of a painting from Dalverzin-tepe.  
(Photo: © Vladimir Terebenin.)

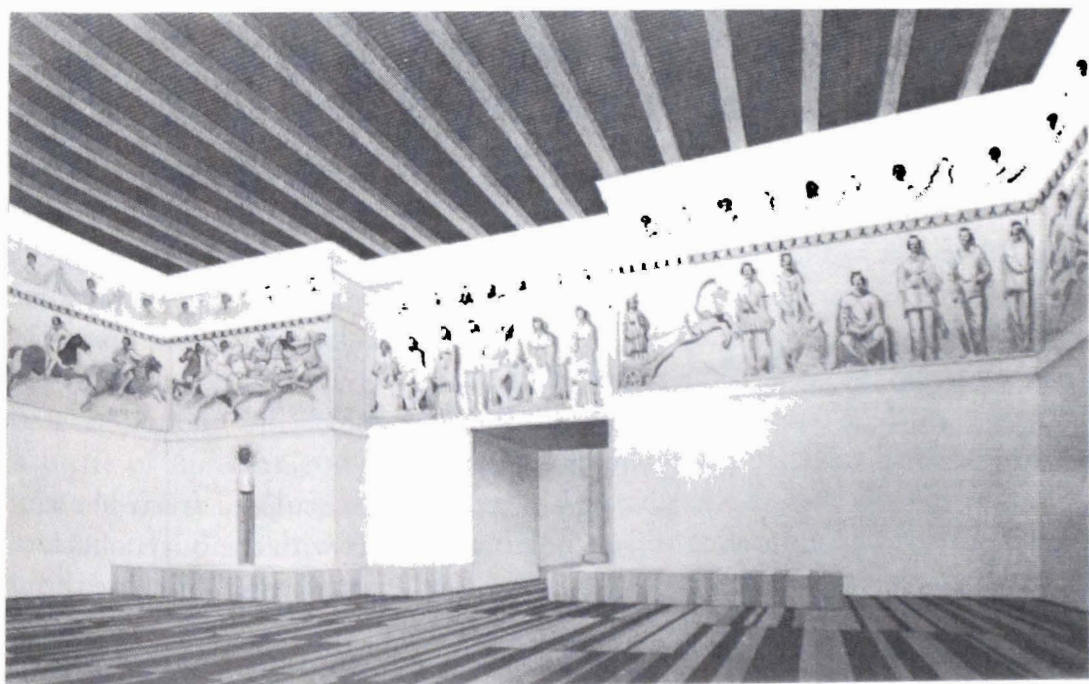


FIG. 11. Hall of the palace in Khalchayan (reconstruction).



FIG. 12. Statue of a queen. Khalchayan. Painted clay.

Greeks brought to Bactria, though the images themselves are emphatically local. A pronounced interest in human individuality is revealed in the portrayal not only of the subject's physical features and age, but also of his emotions. The same style may be seen in the sculpted head of the great goddess of Bactria in the Dalverzin-tepe temple,<sup>24</sup> which dates from the same period, and the image of a crowned local ruler from the temple at Dilberjin.<sup>25</sup>

The main scenes at Khalchayan are topped by a sculpted frieze showing amorinis, naked or in flowing tunics, holding garlands with the busts of actors, musicians, satyrs and mummers inset.<sup>26</sup> The Hellenistic inspiration for this is

24. Pugachenkova and Rtveladze, 1978, Plate 56; Pugachenkova, 1979, Plates 175–6.

25. Kruglikova, 1974, Table 1.

26. Pugachenkova, 1971, pp. 22 et seq., 1979, Figs. 135–6.





FIG. 13. Statue of a Kushan Yüeh-chih prince. Khalchayan. Painted clay.

clearly evident, but the characters are all Asian, or more specifically Bactrian Kushan, in appearance. The identical motif of amorinis holding garlands is carved on a second-century slab from Surkh Kotal.<sup>27</sup>

The cult of Heracles, identified in Bactria with a local divinity or demigod, continued until the very end of the Kushan period. A small first-century statuette of this demigod was found in Takht-i Sangin<sup>28</sup> while his painted clay statue of the second century was found in the garrison built along the gateway bastion at Dilberjin.<sup>29</sup>

A considerable impact on the development of sculpture throughout the

27. Schlumberger et al., 1983, Plate LV.

28. Litvinsky and Pichikyan, 1981, Fig. 12.

29. Pugachenkova, 1977, pp. 77 et seq.



FIG. 14. Kushan Yüeh-chih horseman. Khalchayan. Painted clay.



FIG. 15. Head of a warrior. Khalchayan. Painted clay. (Photo: © Vladimir Terebenin.)



Kushan region was made by Buddhism, the basic images, subjects and topics of which were developed in Gandhāra and spread to the north-west of the empire. Here they were assimilated with earlier indigenous traditions. A case in point is a second-century sculptured frieze from Ayrtaṃ in which female figures half-emerge from acanthus leaves.<sup>30</sup> These are the celestial musicians or *gandharvas*, and girls bearing offerings of flowers, garlands or vessels. But in their ethnic appearance, head-dresses and ornaments they differ from those typical of India, and clearly portray local characteristics.

In portraying the image of the Buddha (Fig. 16), the Bactrian sculptors followed the established canons of the beginning of the Christian era, but for the secondary figures in the Buddhist pantheon – *devatās* (Figs. 17 and 18), genies or *gandharvas* – they returned to earlier Graeco-Bactrian traditions. These can be seen in figures such as the heads of *devatās* from the Buddhist shrine at Dalverzin-tepe, whose softly modelled features and fleeting smiles are reminiscent of the school of Praxiteles.<sup>31</sup>

The Bactrians also differed in their portrayal of lay devotees of Buddhism. The Kushan prince in his pointed head-dress, great ladies with costly hairbands and a magnate from the same Dalverzin shrine are notable for reflecting their personal features. As distinct, however, from Khalchayan, sculptures from Dalverzin (Figs. 19 and 20) suggest a smoother moulding of the features without any sign of age, and controlled, almost non-existent emotions. They correspond not only to the ethical standards and want of sensuality prescribed by Buddhism, but also to the new tendencies in sculpture in which the emphasis in portraiture shifts from the individual to the formal. Even more generalized and formal is the dynastic sculpture of Surkh Kotal, which represents the chief emperors of the Great Kushan dynasty (Fig. 21), including the great emperor Kanishka noted for the shape of his head-dress.

#### THE MINOR ARTS

The hallmark of the various 'minor arts' in Kushan Bactria is seen from the artefacts made by professional craftsmen. Moulded or hand-made terracotta statuettes became widespread, the former most commonly figures of the great goddesses worshipped locally and bound up with ancient folk cults of the mother goddess, the patron of fertility, childbirth and prosperity (Figs. 22 and 23). They differed from region to region on the basis of features, head-dress and clothing, apparently in response to local variations in population.<sup>32</sup> Less fre-

30. Trever, 1940, pp. 149 et seq., Tables 45–9.

31. Pugachenkova, 1979, p. 167, Tables 204–5.

32. Gardin, 1957, Plate X; Pugachenkova, 1979, Plates 178, 179, 181–9; Kruglikova, 1974, Plates 26, 56, 68; Kruglikova and Pugachenkova, 1977, Plates 32, 103; Meshkeris, 1969, Plates 23–5.



FIG. 16. Head of the Buddha from Fayaz-tepe. Termez. Gypsum on clay.  
(Photo: © Vladimir Terebenin.)





FIG. 17. Head of a devatā. Dalverzin-tepe. Gypsum on clay.  
(Photo: © Vladimir Terebenin.)

quent are moulded male statuettes, usually in Kushan costume, either as the goddesses' male companion or as a demigod.<sup>33</sup> But crudely fashioned figurines of mounted horsemen were found far and wide, and are thought to relate to the cult of the ancestor-god brought to the cities by the steppe tribes.<sup>34</sup> The import of ivory from India gave rise to the art of representational carving (Fig. 24). On a plaque from Takht-i Sangin dating from the beginning of the Christian era, for example, there is a dynamic hunting scene in which two horsemen are represented in a manner very reminiscent of the sculptured bowmen of Khalchayan.<sup>35</sup>

33. Gardin, 1957, Plate X; Pugachenkova, 1973, Plate 31.

34. Pugachenkova, 1965, pp. 248 et seq.

35. Litvinsky and Pichikyan, 1981, Figs. 15–16.



FIG. 18. Head of a devatā. Dalverzin-tepe. Gypsum on clay.

The crafted metal jewellery of Kushan Bactria was shaped by the tastes of the upper classes. Its outstanding objects were found in the tombs at Tillya-tepe in northern Afghanistan,<sup>36</sup> and include thousands of gold artefacts (Figs. 25 and 26), sometimes encrusted with precious stones – massive necklaces, bracelets, sheaths, complex composite crowns, finely figured platelets for sewing on clothing or shrouds. Some of these are genuine masterpieces of the jeweller's craft. Many incorporate representational motifs which place them in several stylistic groups.

Some of these motifs can be traced to ancient Oriental traditions in art, such as the open bracelets finished at the ends with the horned heads of lion-griffins. A statuette of a mountain goat in the round, a suite of rearing, horned griffins with snarling dog-like heads or a frontally portrayed scene in which a royal hero grapples with horned, winged and fish-tailed dragons on either side are equally interesting. All these images evoke the art of Achaemenid Iran, though a number of elements in them do appear alien to that tradition.

Some objects bear traces of Hellenistic influence. Among direct imitations from Greek art is the image of Aphrodite. Her Greek features are commonly recast in the Asian mould, as in the case of naked cupids riding dolphins and the figurines of a semi-nude winged goddess reclining on a throne (accompanied in one case by a soaring Eros) or the war-god Ares with a Greek cuirass and a Partho-Bactrian helmet.

36. Sarianidi, 1985.



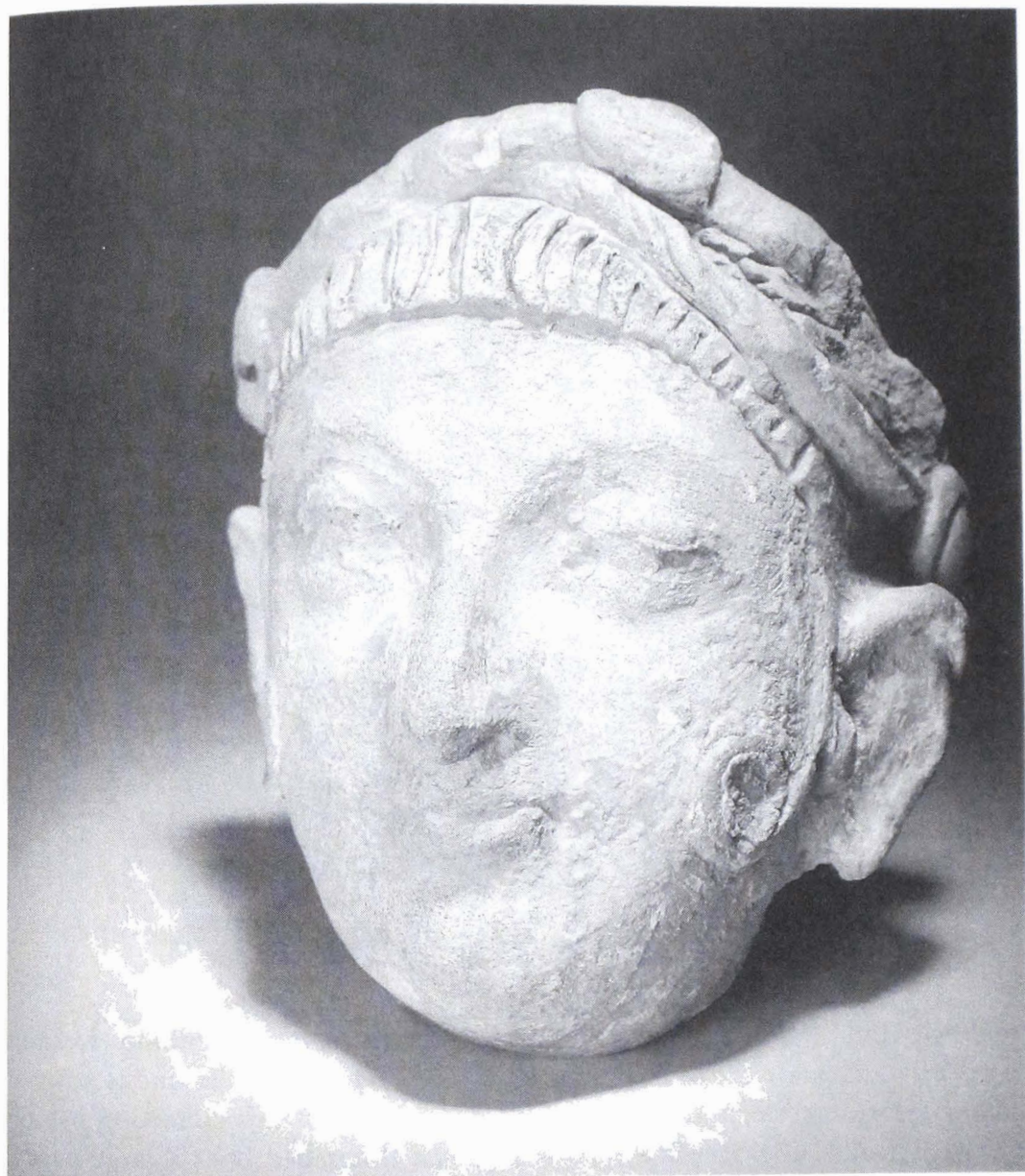


FIG. 19. Head of a noble lady. Dalverzin-tepe. Painted gypsum on clay.  
(Photo: © Vladimir Terebenin.)

Of particular interest is the 'animal style', as it was known. There are small plates depicting rearing dragons or a beast of prey pulling down a quadruped, and phalerae embossed with beasts of prey or fabulous zoomorphic creatures rolled into a ball as if biting their own tails. It should be noted that similar gold phalerae with turquoise insets, portraying a battle between three panthers, have been found in Takht-i Sangin (Fig. 27).

But the Tillya-tepe collection is more than a mere synthesis of ancient Oriental, Hellenized and steppe art: it contains new elements. The faces of the



FIG. 20. Statue of a magnate. Dalverzin-tepe. Painted gypsum on clay.

goddesses and cupids, the heroes and other characters, the clothing, weapons and other details are of an intensely local kind. By their technique (known as the encrustation style) and composition devices most of this collection belongs to what is called the Sarmatian culture, which flourished over a large part of Eurasia from the first century B.C. to the first century A.D.

Archaeologists are inclined to connect the Tillya-tepe burials with the period of the Early Kushans. However, stylistic parallels are so close between many of these items and the objects of Parthian Nisa and the Saka-Parthian strata of Taxila that there is far more reason to detect a link with these peoples' advance into western Bactria, Sistan and then parts of ancient north-western India, yielding to the Kushans only in the first century A.D.

A hoard of first-century objects of gold from Dalverzin-tepe, hidden beneath the doorstep of a wealthy home, illustrates the next phase in the development of Central Asian ornamental metalware.<sup>37</sup> Together with gold discs and

37. Pugachenkova, 1978.





FIG. 21. Statue of a ruler (Kanishka?). Surkh Kotal. Painted gypsum.

bars, many marked with their weight in Kharoṣṭhī characters, the hoard provided a number of crafted ornaments, supposed to have been manufactured by local Bactrian jewellers. These include bracelets, earrings and pectorals. Items of Indian craftsmanship include a necklace that was probably owned by a member of the upper Indian aristocracy while a phalera depicting a fabulous shaggy beast rolled into a ball seems to have been executed in the traditions of Scytho-Sarmatian animal style.

Viewed as a whole, Bactrian art of the Kushan period is a complex, composite and evolving art. The combination of elements that date back to the past, Hellenistic motifs, steppe 'animal style' and Indo-Buddhist influences are all grafted on to native Bactrian traditions and transformed by the creativity of the artist, giving rise to a new and different phase in the development of Bactrian Kushan artistic culture.



FIG. 22. Statuette of a Bactrian goddess. Terracotta from Dalverzin-tepe.



FIG. 23. Statuette of a Bactrian goddess. Terracotta from Dalverzin-tepe.

## Kushan art in Bactria

### SURKH KOTAL

Surkh Kotal, about 14 km north of Pul-i Khumri and 232 km north of Kabul, is noted for dynastic temples that were set up during the reign of the Great Kushan king Kanishka and his successors in the second century A.D. In the main temple a square fire altar was found, suggesting the existence of belief in



FIG. 24. Comb with engraved figures. Ivory from Dalverzin-tepe.

Zoroastrianism. Schlumberger suggested that the sculptural decoration of the temples showed a blending of different artistic trends, including steeped merlons of Oriental tradition. Noticing the stone frieze, the series of unbaked and painted clay figures, and the damaged stone reliefs, he suggested that the statues found there should be compared with the enthroned figures at Nimrud Dag of the mid-first century B.C. representing rulers (or gods) and the Kushan images of Mathura.<sup>38</sup>

The statues of a Kushan noble and the Kanishka statue exhibit the same symmetry, dress and jewellery. Most of the sculpture from Surkh Kotal provides evidence for indigenous Bactrian art and its relation with the art of Gandhāra.

#### TILLYA-TEPE

Tillya-tepe (Golden Hill), 5 km north of Sheberghan, was excavated by the Afghan-Soviet Archaeological Mission in 1978/79 and yielded 20,000 gold artefacts. It was the site of a temple in the second millennium B.C. During the rule of the Achaemenids a magnificent palace was built but it was later damaged by

38. Rosenfield, 1967, pp. 165–7.



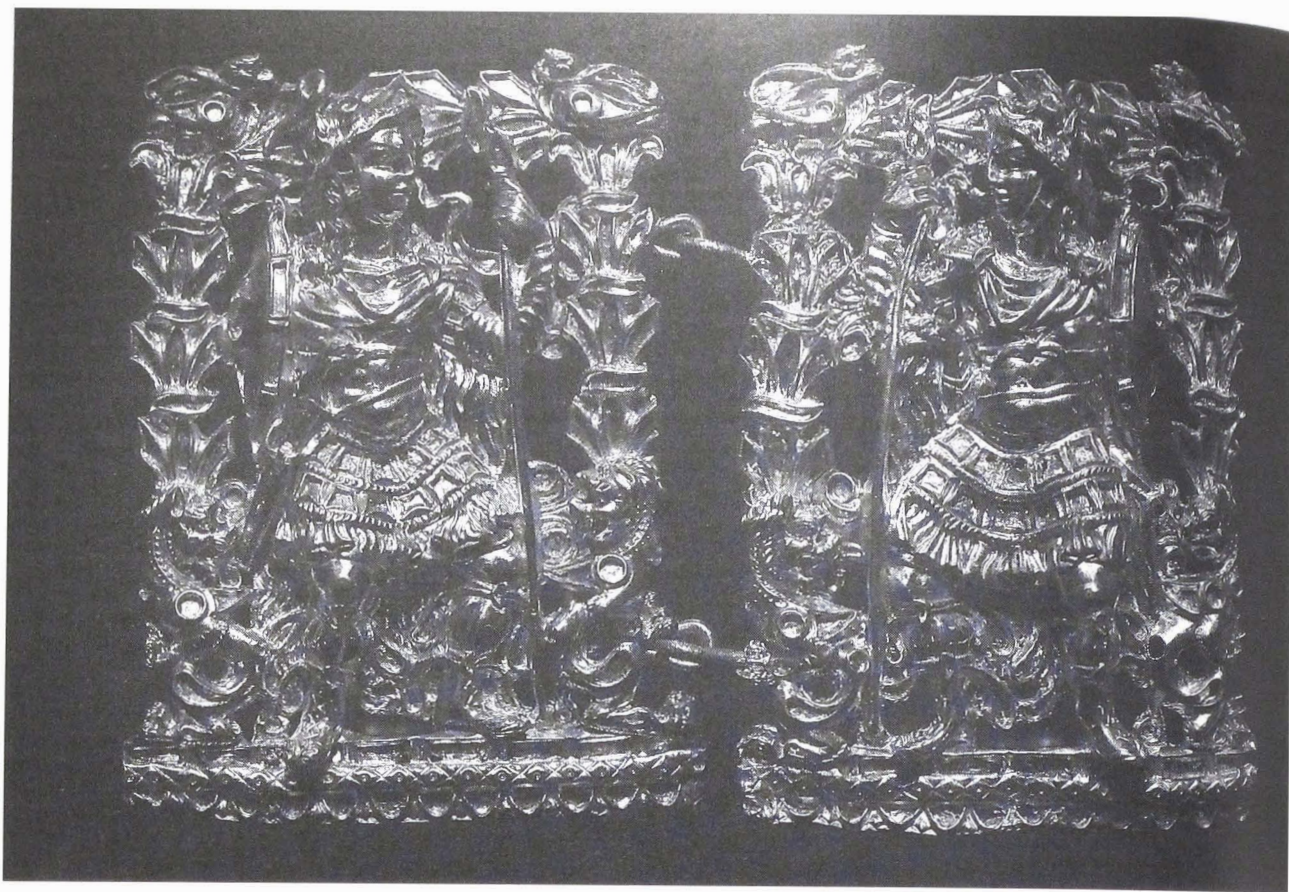


FIG. 25. Sitting warrior. Tillya-tepe. (Courtesy of V. Sarianidi.)



FIG. 26. Goddess between two dragons. Tillya-tepe. (Courtesy of V. Sarianidi.)





FIG. 27. Gold phalera. Takht-i Sangin. (Photo: © Vladimir Terebenin.)

fire, and completely destroyed by the Greek army in the fourth century B.C. Later, in the first century A.D., the site was used as a graveyard for one or two generations in the time of the Kushans. The numerous objects of the site's earlier period include Greek antiquities of Graeco-Bactrian date. Those from the later period represent the production of Bactrian artists and can be compared with the Begram hoard providing evidence of contacts with India, Rome, China and Parthia.<sup>39</sup> The style of this group was influenced by local trends, and by Graeco-Bactrian, Roman and Parthian art, a combination of styles that sheds light on some unsolved problems of the Kushan art of later centuries.

#### DILBERJIN KAZAN

The temple of Dilberjin Kazan, situated 4 km north-west of Balkh, was excavated by the Afghan-Soviet Archaeological Mission over several seasons, and produced painted clay statues and wall paintings, which reveal traces of Bactrian style influenced by Transoxania. The wall paintings are most important for the study of art in northern Afghanistan during the Kushan period. They can be compared to the paintings from Balalik-tepe in southern Uzbekistan, dated by ex-Soviet archaeologists to the end of the fifth and beginning of the sixth century A.D. The dating proposed for these paintings of Dilberjin Kazan is the first

39. Sarianidi, 1985.

half of the fifth century A.D. The paintings are not the earliest ones found at Dilberjin Kazan, which belong to the Graeco-Bactrian period, according to Kruglikova. The façade of the temple is decorated with a painting representing the Dioscuri with their horses, while another painting on a later wall of the same temple depicts Śiva and Parvatī seated on the bull Nandi, surrounded by devotees.

## Kushan art in Nagarahāra and Arachosia

### BEGRAM

Begram, about 64 km north-east of Kabul, has been identified with Kāpiśa, the summer capital of the famous Kushan king Kanishka. The *Délégation Archéologique Française en Afghanistan* (DAFA) carried out several limited excavations there between 1936 and 1946 but only a small part of the town area has been dug. The ruins of Begram represent three stages in the history of this famous city.<sup>40</sup> The original foundations were laid out on a plan not markedly different from Hellenistic cities such as Dura-Europos. This was the capital of the last of the Graeco-Bactrian kings and the first rulers of the Kushan dynasty. The second Begram, modified only by the construction of new palaces and fortifications, was the northern capital of Kanishka and his successors. It is clear that the town was violently destroyed by fire, probably at the time of the disastrous invasion of the Sasanians. The last town rose on the ruins and was probably abandoned with the coming of the Hephthalites in the fifth century A.D.<sup>41</sup>

The fame of Begram rests on the discovery of two rooms (probably part of the 'palace'), which were filled with objects of enormous value – Chinese lacquer boxes, Graeco-Roman statuettes in bronze, a collection of fine Roman glass, Graeco-Roman vessels of porphyry and alabaster and an extraordinary group of plaster casts (Fig. 28) apparently taken from classical metalwork. In addition, the treasure rooms yielded a large number of superb Indian ivory carvings (Figs. 29–31), which had originally served as parts of various articles of furniture. Many of these objects represent types and techniques otherwise unknown to classical Graeco-Roman and Indian art. The discoveries at Begram show that under the Kushans there were close relations at artistic and cultural levels between Bactria, Gandhāra and Rome. The find of such a treasure of classical luxury goods at Kāpiśa is thus an interesting phenomenon, which seems to indicate a prevalent taste for Graeco-Roman art.<sup>42</sup>

40. MacDowall and Taddei, 1978, p. 257.

41. Rowland, 1976, pp. 24–5.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 28.



FIG. 28. Plaster emblem of a sleeping maenad. First century A.D. Begram (diameter 17.5 cm).

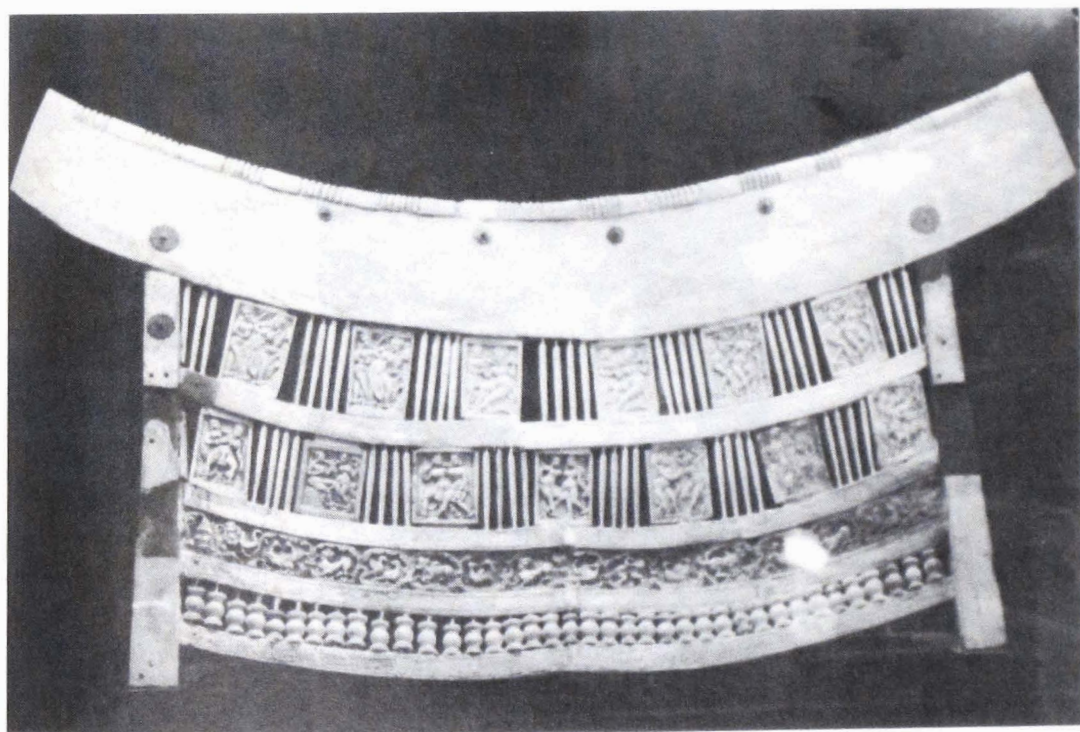


FIG. 29. Ivory throne back. Second century A.D. Begram (height 57 cm).





FIG. 30. Ivory panel. Second century A.D. Begram (height 41 cm).



FIG. 31. Ivory statuette of a yakṣī. First century A.D. Begram (height 40 cm).

## HADDA

Hadda was the magnificent Buddhist centre of Gandhāra about 8 km south of Jalalabad. Like a golden mirage of towers, the thousand stupas of Nagarahāra and Hadda drew the Chinese pilgrims Fa-hsien and Hsüan-tsang to this pilgrimage centre in the fifth and seventh centuries A.D. respectively. As a result of archaeological excavations by DAFA and the Afghan Archaeological Mission, several *saṅghārāmas*, stupas and other constructions such as porches decorated with statues and paintings have been discovered. The numerous objects found include statues of the Buddha, of Buddhist monks, donors, Vajrapāṇis, coins and pottery. The evidence from the *saṅghārāmas* and stupas of Hadda and the surrounding areas shows the artistic importance of the region under the Kushans and later rulers. The style of art is associated with the Gandhāra school and exhibits a blending of Bactrian, Graeco-Roman and Indian concepts. There are sculptures in schist and limestone, but mostly in clay, stucco or lime plaster. According to Marshall, the stucco sculpture represents a late Indo-Bactrian renaissance, while Bachhofer considers it as a later development of the Gandhāra style.<sup>43</sup>

The problem of the chronology of the stucco sculptures from Hadda needs further elucidation. While it is certain that the majority belongs to the Kushan period, it is clear that some of the material excavated should be assigned to a date before the arrival of the Kushans. The outstanding feature is their extraordinary skill in portraying human character and emotions, in a way rarely seen in other parts of the Kushan Empire.

Some pieces from Hadda show the influence of local trends in style and subject matter. Statues of local people, yakṣīs, donors with Kushan dress suggest the mixing of the local and foreign elements in Gandhāra art, which, according to Schlumberger, had its base here. Finds of artistic material from Begram, Ay Khanum, Surkh Kotal, Dilberjin Kazan and Tillya-tepe support this and the excavations of the Afghan Archaeological Mission at Tepe Shotor in Hadda throw new light on the theory advanced by Schlumberger.

## PAITAVA AND SHOTORAK

The *saṅghārāmas* at Paitava and Shotorak, near Begram, excavated by DAFA, were decorated with sculptures that were mostly carvings in the familiar blue-grey schist of Gandhāra. The image of the Buddha and other Buddhist divinities and representations from the *Jātakas* figure here. Some of these images have a hieratic rigidity suggestive of the sculpture of Hatra and Palmyra, and this resemblance extends to the treatment of the drapery as well. Other carvings

43. Roland, 1976, p. 28.

from these sites, like the monumental reliefs of the Buddha and Kaśyapa, suggest the deeply carved reliefs of the Gandhāra style of the second and third centuries A.D. According to Rowland, 'these fragments of stone sculpture from the region of Begram are of great importance, illustrating the final phase of the Gandhāra style that was destined to exercise far greater influence on Buddhist sculptures in Central Asia'.

The influence of a local element is traceable in Paitava carvings. The figure of a standing donor carrying offerings under the śāla tree is a typical example. He wears the characteristic Kushan mantle, baggy trousers and felt boots similar to the dress of the famous statues of King Kanishka from Surkh Kotal and Mathura. Similar types of donors are portrayed at Hadda.

#### TEPE SARDAR

The early layer of Tepe Sardar, south of Ghazni near the Kabul–Kandahar highway, excavated by the Italian Mission in 1959, yielded interesting material mostly related to the time of the Later Kushans. The excavated layers are simply a thick filling following the destruction of a rich decorative complex made of unbaked-clay sculptures. These layers have similarities with those of the Kāpiśa, Fondukistan, Tepe Maranjan and Jalalabad areas. The clay sculpture of the earlier phase of Tepe Sardar, in its manifold aspects, belongs to the tradition of Bactrian Hellenism, and shows affinities with the clay images from Surkh Kotal and Tepe Maranjan.<sup>44</sup>

#### TEPE MARANJAN (KABUL)

The monastery of Tepe Maranjan, on the eastern outskirts of Kabul, may be dated to the late fourth century A.D. Its sculptures are executed in clay with a thin veneer of lime plaster, and appear to be a later development of Hadda style, anticipating the style of Cave G at Bamiyan and of Fondukistan, in a combination of painting and sculpture. As in other areas of Gandhāran art, jewellery distinguishes a Bodhisattva from the Buddha.<sup>45</sup> Similar material was found at Tepe Khazana, north-west of Kabul town, reflecting the later Gandhāra style of the fifth or sixth century A.D.

44. MacDowall and Taddei, 1978, pp. 278–9.

45. Snellgrove, 1978, p. 183.

## Kushan art of Gandhāra

Although the beginning of Kushan art in Bactria can now be traced, as is shown by the excavations at Khalchayan<sup>46</sup> and Ay Khanum,<sup>47</sup> very little work has been done so far to establish its origin in Gandhāra proper. This is because the Kushan art of Gandhāra has so far been studied from a limited perspective. Kushan material has been excavated from only three major cities within the cultural periphery of Gandhāra – at Begram (or Kāpiśa),<sup>48</sup> Puṣkalāvātī (or Peucelao-tis)<sup>49</sup> and Taxila<sup>50</sup> – and from the two sites outside the Indus region, that is, Mathura<sup>51</sup> and Surkh Kotal.<sup>52</sup> Takht-i Bahi, Jamal Garhi, Sahr-i Bahlol, Shah-jiki-Dheri (Peshawar), Tharelli, Mekha Sanda, Nathu, Sanghao, Hadda, Manikyala, Rani Ghat, etc. have yielded material for study. Besides these, at least twenty Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions and numerous gold and copper coins have been found. But although we know about many Buddhist sculptures<sup>53</sup> of the Kushan period from the region, Gandhāra art has so far been studied only for the sake of its sculptural wealth and Buddhist religion or to detect Western influence, never with a view to studying the civilization of which the sculptures were a part.<sup>54</sup>

### GANDHĀRAN ART AND BUDDHISM

The Kushan sculptures from Gandhāra are predominantly Buddhist. Although the Buddha himself never visited Gandhāra, with the passage of time the area became a veritable holy land for his followers. Several spots were identified as having an alleged association with the Buddha in his pre-natal existence, and over these, stupas and monasteries were built. In early Buddhism, introduced here by Aśoka (third century B.C.), the Buddha was never represented in human form. But constant exposure of the Gandhāra Buddhists to the art and pantheistic religion of the Western world created a schism between the purist and the more forward-looking Buddhists. Whether out of conviction or as an act of liberal patronage, Kanishka is said to have convened the fourth Buddhist Council at Kuvana near Jullundur (or at Kandalavana in Kashmir), which finally put an end to the dissensions that had distracted the Buddhist Church for nearly a cen-

46. Pugachenkova, 1971.

47. Bernard, 1967; Bernard et al., 1973.

48. Ghirshman, 1946.

49. Dani, 1965/66.

50. Marshall, 1951.

51. Vogel, 1910; Rosenfield, 1967, p. 41.

52. Schlumberger, 1955, 1961, pp. 77–95.

53. Ingholt, 1957; Marshall, 1960, pp. 63–108.

54. Dani, 1969, p. 2.

ture.<sup>55</sup> As a result, Mahayanism – a liberal and progressive school of Buddhism – flourished in Gandhāra and laid emphasis, among other things, on the transformation of the Buddha into a great mythological, almost eternal, god, and on the deification of future Buddhas as holding providences.<sup>56</sup> In the visual arts, the Buddha was permitted for the first time to be represented in human form. It is a moot point where and when the first image of the Buddha was made – in Gandhāra or at Mathura.<sup>57</sup> Probably, it developed simultaneously at both places, one developing directly out of indigenous Indian art and the other (Gandhāra) borrowing its type from the West. Formerly it was generally held that the earliest Buddha images belonged to the time of Kanishka, but long ago Marshall wrote of an Early Gandhāra style developing during the first century A.D. New excavations by the Italian Archaeological Mission in Swat and a reassessment of the Taxila evidence have led several scholars to push back the date even to the first century B.C.

#### THE DEVELOPMENT OF BUDDHIST ART

The sudden liberalization of Buddhism was a signal for the development of Buddhist art in Gandhāra and it soon reached its peak. However, it is wrong to say that the profusion and popularity of Gandhāra art owes its existence to the state-owned Church or that its distinctive appearance is indebted to the mechanical product of higher craftsmanship from the West.<sup>58</sup> As a matter of fact, Gandhāra art simply expresses the socio-religious fervour of its people. An indigenous socio-economic stratum of cultivated taste – the merchants, bankers, caravaners and minor officials – and not the Kushan nobility may have provided the main impetus for its development.<sup>59</sup> The Kushans themselves never extended any official patronage to it. They were eclectic in religion, fire-worshippers in Bactria, Buddhists in Gandhāra and Hindus in Mathura.<sup>60</sup>

#### SCULPTURE

The Kushan art of Gandhāra is mainly known from the wealth of sculpture recovered from the numerous Buddhist stupas and monasteries throughout Gandhāra. Standing and seated statues of the Buddha and the Bodhisattva Maitreya, and stone slabs depicting in low relief the legend of the Buddha's birth stories, or *Jātakas*, abound. Most of these statues and panels were carved out of a locally available grey or blue slate stone called schist, but stucco was also used

55. Puri, 1965, p. 143; Watters, 1904/05, pp. 273-6.

56. Puri, 1965, p. 145.

57. Coomaraswamy, 1926, pp. 165 et seq.; Lohuizen-de Leeuw, 1949, pp. 170-1.

58. Rowland, 1970, pp. 121-5.

59. Rosenfield, 1967, p. 73.

60. Schlumberger, 1961, pp. 77-95.





FIG. 32. Miracle of Śrāvastī. Lahore Museum.



for making statues and reliefs (Fig. 32). Clay and terracotta were used relatively sparingly. The change of medium (from schist to stucco) gave more freedom, diversity and cheapness. Modelling in malleable material made it easier to prepare casts from moulds and made it more convenient and cheaper to increase production. Whether or not the use of stone and stucco for sculpturing finally split up in two different schools – the latter springing phoenix-like from the ashes of the former but still separated from the other by a hiatus of a century and a half<sup>61</sup> – does not concern us here.

#### FIGURE OF THE BUDDHA

The Gandhāra Buddha is an idealized figure having a delightful face unaffected by age or affliction. Standing barefoot or seated cross-legged he is always shown wearing an undergarment and a monk's robe. Among the signs of a *mahā-puruṣalakṣaṇa* (great man), the *uṣṇīṣa*, *ūrṇā* and *dharmacakra* are usually visible. His Apollo Belvedere type of face, though just one among the numerous types known, is no doubt the earliest to provide a model for others. The model of a standing Buddha might have been copied from a Greek god or a hero or even from a Roman emperor wearing pallium or toga, as the Kushans definitely had diplomatic and commercial relations with the contemporary Roman West. But beyond this, borrowing ceases. The seated Buddha and the figure of the seated or standing Bodhisattva (Fig. 33), the latter a peculiar invention of Gandhāran artists, have no classical or Indian precedent. Statues of Pāṇcika, the Commander of the Lord's army, and his consort Hārītī are also local figures *par excellence*. Furthermore, almost all Gandhāra statues were carved in the round.

#### CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES

The most characteristic feature of Gandhāra sculptures is their frontality. Figures normally stare fixedly into one's eyes or are turned completely to right or left. There is seldom movement in their bodies. This can be understood in the light of Kushan sculptures from Khalchayan. These are not strictly frontal but turn slightly with restrained emotions. They are a step towards frontality and a sharp contrast to the highly emotional images of the Hellenistic world and the complete side views of Achaemenid sculpture. The fixed, unemotional frontality of the Kushan art of Gandhāra has obviously been brought from Khalchayan.

Attempts have been made to identify portraits in Gandhāra sculptures, such as the two heads from Sahr-i Bahlol and Shpolā stupa.<sup>62</sup> But these are the heads of donors detached from their bodies. There may be statues of donors

61. Marshall, 1960, pp. 109–12.

62. Ingholt, 1957, p. 163, No. 423, p. 194, No. 563.



FIG. 33. Standing Bodhisattva. Lahore Museum.

showing characteristic individual features and wearing regional costumes but they never represented specific individuals. No doubt in Bactria<sup>63</sup> and Mathura<sup>64</sup> portraits of Kushan rulers and nobility in characteristic Kushan dress are numerous, but there is no such presence of the Kushan nobility in Gandhāra sculpture, not even in the figures of the Buddha and Bodhisattva. In Buddhist art, an individual – ecclesiastical or temporal monk, donor, king or commoner – always remains anonymous.

63. Rowland, 1970, p. 146, Fig. 86.

64. Rosenfield, 1967, pp. 138–53.

## JĀTAKA STORIES

The Gandhāra panels narrate the *Jātakas*, or birth stories of the Buddha, in a simple, clear and lucid way which is in sharp contrast to the confused style of earlier schools, seen at Bharhut and Sanchi. Although the number of events is limited, the art of narration is simple and easy to understand. Figures in a panel stand out in correct relation to one another with proper spacing between them. Sometimes even perspective is emphasized. In this way a minimum number of figures are needed to narrate a complete story. When more than one story is required on a panel, each is separated from the other with the help of vertically arranged columns, pilasters and recessed panels, or horizontally arranged cornices and mouldings. Normally, the actors of a story are arranged in single file and move from right to left.

## RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE

We are fortunate in having a better knowledge of the development of religious architecture in Gandhāra. The Kushan contribution is substantial. Except for Shrine 8 at Taxila, almost all Kushan monuments in Gandhāra are Buddhist. Shrine 8 is a square building within an enclosed wall measuring  $37 \times 37$  m relieved with buttresses on each side and nine inter-communicating chambers. One study has associated this shrine with the Kushan occupation of the area, though its exact date and purpose cannot be ascertained.<sup>65</sup>

Stupas and monasteries were the principal buildings of the period, as Hsüan-tsang notices in his account of the Great Vihāra built by Kanishka at Peshawar. It is said to have been built as a thirteen-storey tower with a total height of 213 m. Nothing of the monument survives except the famous inscribed Kanishka casket, now in the Peshawar Museum, and a few sculptures.<sup>66</sup> Among standing monuments, the remains at Takht-i Bahi, Jamal Garhi, Tharelli and the sites of Jaulian, Mohra-Muradu, Kalawan, Pipala, etc. in the Taxila valley are the best examples of the Kushan contribution to Gandhāra architecture.

## GANDHĀRA STUPAS AND MONASTERIES

The basis of the Gandhāra monastery is a court or a series of courts open to the sky and surrounded either by cells for monks or by niches to place devotional objects. Connected with the court are usually an assembly hall, refectories and a room for the chief priest on one side and the main stupa encircled by votive stupas of varying sizes on the other. Gandhāra monastic establishments were built

65. Dar, 1980, pp. 91–106.

66. Spooner, 1908/09, pp. 38–59; Dobbins, 1971, pp. 12–40.

exclusively in stone diaper masonry typical of the Kushan period. The entire surface of the walls was covered with a thick coating of lime plaster. The roofs were mainly vaulted and doors and windows were either trabeated or corbelled. By the first and second centuries A.D., this type and pattern of monastic architecture had emerged and became fixed all over northern India. Taxila can boast of some of the earliest permanent monasteries.<sup>67</sup> Although the development of monasteries in Gandhāra antedates the arrival of the Kushans (cf. the Dharmarājika stupa), it was here that the pattern of monastic establishment was perfected and became popular. A large number of such establishments in Gandhāra, their sizes, cultural content, elaborate facilities and architectural embellishments, clearly point to the economic prosperity of the period and the patronage accorded to the development of art.

#### ORNAMENTATION

The Gandhāra stupa with its carved base, circular drum and spherical dome, together with its sculptural embellishments, marks a development from the primitive types known at Sanchi and Bharhut and at Dharmarājika (Taxila), Shankaradara (Swat) and Manikyala. The Kushan contribution lies in the overall sculptural ornamentation of the bases and drums of stupas. Apart from stone reliefs fixed on the largest stupas, the smaller votive stupas were usually embellished with stucco figures of the Buddha, Bodhisattvas and devotees set in niches, and with figures of Atlantes, elephants, lions, caryatids, yakṣīs, etc., crouching under cornices and supporting the load of each receding terrace of the stupa base. A variety of arches, pediments, debased Corinthian capitals, dentils, merlons, rosettes and lotuses abound in both stone and stucco. The debased example of an Ionic capital in stucco is known from the Pipala stupa at Taxila. Sometimes figures of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas were set in the foliage of Corinthian capitals carved in stone. Huge Corinthian capitals, set up on pilasters or a round column, are known from Taxila and elsewhere. Most of the columns and pilasters used as architectural pieces were probably made either of wood or of some other perishable material because except for a miniature fluted column with a Corinthian capital, now in the Taxila Museum, and an Ionic column also from Taxila, now in the Lahore Museum, no such column has survived.<sup>68</sup>

#### MINOR ARTS AND COINAGE

There is not much evidence for the minor arts of the period except for the Kushan coinage. It is difficult to allocate to periods the material from Scytho-

67. Dutt, 1962, pp. 24, 213.

68. Rowland, 1970, p. 145.

Parthian and Kushan levels, partly because it comes from unscientific excavations and partly because all these dynasties had the same geoethnic background and were subject to the same sources of influence from the contemporary West. The entire material represents the same mixture of classical, Iranian and local forms and techniques that characterizes the art of Gandhāra.<sup>69</sup>

The coins from Gandhāra are the best evidence for the strangely syncretic character of Kushan art, culture and religion. They show a portrait copied from the bust of the Roman emperor Augustus, the first figure of Buddha and an array of twenty-eight deities of Hellenistic Irano-Babylonian and Indian origins, all identified by legends in Bactrian Greek script.

Casting in bronze and copper was not as common in Gandhāra as sculpting in stone, stucco and terracotta. A few bronze statues are known from Sahr-i Bahlol,<sup>70</sup> Chinkolai (Swat) and other places.<sup>71</sup> These, however, appear to be later than the Kushan period under review, but all the nine metal statuettes from the Sirkap site of Taxila come from the two last strata and can conveniently be dated to the first and second centuries A.D. With the exception of one thin repoussé copper bust in a medallion, all the others are solid cast in open or piece-moulds.<sup>72</sup> Among these are figures of purely Graeco-Roman origin such as Harpocrates, Cupid, Psyche and Aphrodite as well as Hindu and Buddhist figures. Metal sculptures from other places are mainly Buddhist.

#### TERRACOTTA FIGURINES

It is interesting to note that not a single terracotta figurine has been reported from the limited excavations of the Kushan city of Sirsukh in Taxila. However, the art of making terracotta and clay figures continued at Taxila, as elsewhere, until the fifth century A.D. Despite some borrowings from Hellenistic motifs, this terracotta art, 'in its own way, was just as original, forceful and independent as the Gupta Art of Hindustan and more so than the contemporary Byzantine Art in the West'.<sup>73</sup> Slip casting that is, the use of crushed stone and clay to make terracotta figures, was introduced for the first time at Taxila and became popular throughout the Kushan period.<sup>74</sup>

The Kushan craftsmen inherited the art of making figurines in terracotta or clay from their predecessors, the Mauryas, Indo-Greeks, Scythians and Parthians.<sup>75</sup> Their figurines included human, animal and other toy models. The

69. Dar, 1977, pp. 61–89.

70. Rowland, 1970, pp. 185–6.

71. Hallade, 1968, p. 86, Plate 62, p. 168, Plate 128.

72. Marshall, 1951, Vol. II, pp. 604–6.

73. *Ibid.*, p. 442.

74. Mian, 1974, p. 206.

75. Marshall, 1951, Vol. II, pp. 435–72; Wheeler, 1962; Dani, 1965/66, pp. 46–109.

figurines were either hand-made or wheel-turned to make a hollow body that was later moulded by hand to a human or animal shape. Figures were also cast in single as well as double moulds. Sometimes, faces were moulded and fixed to hand-made bodies.<sup>76</sup> Almost all these types began with the Indo-Greeks and continued through the Parthian period up to the end of the Kushans.<sup>77</sup> According to Dani, the real Gandhāra terracotta human figurines, with well-formed heads and beautiful faces, were developed during the Middle Kushan period.<sup>78</sup> Among animal figurines, bodies were either solid or hollow. Bulls, horses, elephants, camels, monkeys, dogs, rams and goats were the most popular, but we also find tigers, snakes, crocodiles, pigs, birds, bird chariots and toy carts.

#### JEWELLERY

The inventory of specimens of Gandhāra jewellery and ornaments that can definitely be dated to the Kushan period is not very long. However, this scarcity of material is amply compensated for by the profusion of jewellery represented in Gandhāra sculpture. For example, the figures of Bodhisattva, Hārītī and other females are shown wearing gorgeous jewellery items that are not very different from the specimens of the same or slightly earlier period. A collection of 180 items from the last stratum of Sirkap,<sup>79</sup> thirteen from Tor Dheri, three from the Rawalpindi area and seventy-two from Palatu Dheri<sup>80</sup> and a few other gold ornaments reportedly from the Taxila region, now preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London,<sup>81</sup> and the Cleveland Museum of Arts<sup>82</sup> etc., is all that we have of Kushan jewellery from Gandhāra. To this can perhaps be added the famous bejewelled gold casket and thirty ornaments from Bimaran of slightly earlier date.<sup>83</sup>

The Gandhāra jewellery displays a variety of styles and techniques. The representation of jewellery on statues throws light on the Kushan fashion of bedecking individuals with ornaments. Men wore jewellery as much as women, whereas before and after the Kushans, the wearing of personal ornaments was the prerogative of ladies alone. The richness of ornaments depended on the status of the person wearing them. Bodhisattvas, kings and queens, men and women of noble birth and even deities are always shown wearing heavy jewellery. Commoners either wore samples of ornaments or none at all.

76. Mian, 1974, p. 206.

77. Dani, 1965/66, p. 47.

78. Ibid., pp. 43, 65.

79. Marshall, 1951, II, pp. 616–37.

80. Marshall, 1902/03, pp. 172, 185–99.

81. Hallade, 1968, Plates IX and XI.

82. Anon., 1953, p. 200.

83. Wilson, 1841, p. 71.



The Taxila collection of jewellery is predominantly Graeco-Roman in character,<sup>84</sup> but Gandhāra jewellery generally shows the same range of classical, Iranian, Sarmatian and Indian forms and techniques that we see in the art of Gandhāra. These reflect current trends and taste, and show how the Gandhāra types developed out of earlier ones. The commonest types of Gandhāra jewellery include earrings of leech-and-pendant type, necklaces, neckbands, bangles, bracelets and armlets, anklets, girdles, hairpins, amulets of great variety, etc., and are usually worn by Bodhisattvas. There is also a wide variety of finger-rings with or without encrusted gems and seal impressions. Decorative items, such as broches, turban pins, and miniature gold figures of Cupid, Psyche, animals, birds, flowers and necklaces with fanciful designs are known from Taxila, but waist-cords, bejewelled breast-chains and footwear are known only from statues. Quintus Curtius (*History of Alexander* 9.1.5) provides an interesting reference to the golden staff set with beryls and jewelled golden sandals of Sopeithes, the King of the Salt Range and a contemporary of Alexander the Great.

Gandhāra jewellery shows a fully developed stage of the crafts of granulation and filigree, which the Gandhāra goldsmiths borrowed from Western Asia, and the art of incrustation of gems, which the Orient lent to the West. Technically, Gandhāra ornaments were made with dies and by hammering, casting, moulding (lost-wax method) and repoussé. The forty-two pieces of silverware,<sup>85</sup> all belonging to the Late Parthian and Early Kushan periods, clearly show that the crafts of the silversmith and coppersmith were equally developed. Whereas much of the Taxila ware reflects Graeco-Roman culture in vessels such as askoi, phialai, mesomphaloi, aryballoi, kantharoi, paterae and goblets, copper and bronze vessels show a mixture of Western and Central Asian elements and predominantly local influences. Also, almost all types are represented in pottery forms, suggesting a uniform Gandhāra culture during the first and second centuries A.D.

Much other material, such as gems, seals carved with a variety of designs, bone, ivory, shell and glass objects and a wide range of beads, has been excavated from numerous cities and stupa sites. The best examples of ivory are from Taxila<sup>86</sup> and Begram,<sup>87</sup> all clearly showing how deeply this art was related to local craftsmanship.

Precious and semi-precious stones were used for making seals and jewellery, agate, amethyst, carnelian, chalcedony, crystal, garnet, jasper, lapis lazuli,

84. Marshall, 1951, II, p. 616; Sharif, 1978, pp. 46–7.

85. Marshall, 1951, Vol. III, pp. 564–606.

86. Ibid., Vol. III, pp. 199 et seq.

87. Rowland, 1971.

onyx and turquoise. Glass, marble, mother-of-pearl, shell, steatite, ivory and bone were used for beads, which were made in a variety of shapes – domical, spherical and tubular – in animal and bird forms. They were perforated from one or both sides and polished.

#### A SUMMARY

In brief, the Kushan art of Gandhāra was a living art open to influence from within and without. It absorbed the earlier Graeco-Bactrian traditions current in the area and was also receptive to ideas and trends of the contemporary West through international trade and commerce. Gandhāra acted as the hub from which Kushan art spread in many directions to places such as Mathura, Devnamori and Amaravati in India and towns in Afghanistan and Central Asia. As a result of recent discoveries at Khalchayan, Ay Khanum and Surkh Kotal, there is now no doubt that some form of Hellenistic school lay behind Gandhāra art, but it is wrong to call it an example of Western art. It has its own individuality, reflecting the socio-religious aspirations of its people. Economic prosperity and peace remained the basis of its popularity and development, and when that was no longer the case the art could not sustain itself: it languished and then disappeared.

## Kushan art in Mathura

#### AGE AND TECHNIQUE

The art of Mathura both precedes and post-dates Kushan art over a total span of about 1,000 years, but the Mathura workshops were most active and productive during the rule of the Kushan emperors, especially Kanishka, Huvishka and Vāsudeva (second and third centuries A.D.), which represent the golden age of Mathura sculpture.<sup>88</sup> The earliest dated specimen of Kushan art at Mathura, the statue of Bodhisattva now in the Sarnath Museum,<sup>89</sup> was made in the third year of Kanishka.<sup>90</sup> Mathura sculptures were carved from the spotted red sandstone quarried at Sikri, near the city, and its craftsmen mastered the technique of carving stone that was liable to be marred by streaks or spots. Some scholars believe that they originally covered the whole carved surface with a layer of polychrome or gilt.<sup>91</sup>

88. Agrawala, 1965, p. 2.

89. Vogel, 1930, p. 107, Plate XXVIIIa.

90. Chanda, 1936, pp. 11, 12, 16.

91. Rowland, 1970, p. 149.

GANDHĀRAN INFLUENCE AND ROYAL PORTRAITS

Mathura artists, by their central geographical position, were open to influences from both Gandhāra and Amaravati, and they sent their images to a wide range of sacred sites. Typical Mathura sculptures of Kushan date have been discovered at Varanasi, Gaya, Śrāvastī,<sup>92</sup> Taxila<sup>93</sup> and Puṣkalāvati.<sup>94</sup>

At first sight the style of Mathura seems to be a sequel to that of the stupas at Bharhut and Sanchi, but it is related to two other traditions – the art of Amaravati and the Graeco-Buddhist art of Gandhāra.<sup>95</sup> The gallery of royal portraits from the Devakula at Mat, near Mathura,<sup>96</sup> has given us portrait figures of Vima Takṣuma, Kanishka and Caṣṭana<sup>97</sup> set up in the reign of Huvishka. They are neither in the Gandhāra nor in the Mathura style, but possess an autonomous stylistic character of their own. Vima's seated figure wears a short tunic and heavy felt boots of Central Asian origin.<sup>98</sup> The headless statue of Kanishka shows the Great King standing, wearing a Central Asian stiff mantle (caftan) and heavy felt boots, his right hand resting on a mace and his left holding a broad sword.<sup>99</sup> The posture is rigid, stiff, frontal and hieratic but conveys the valour and kingly virtue of the dynasty (see Fig. 2, Chapter 11).

The Devakula portraits, almost in relief with no suggestion of any three-dimensional form, show clear signs of Hellenistic and Parthian influence.<sup>100</sup> They are the sole examples of portrait sculpture known from ancient India.

Apart from these portraits, the most striking examples of the Kushan art of Mathura are the figures of yakṣas and yakṣīs, nāgas and nāganīs and female (Śālabhāṇjikā) figures (Figs. 34 and 35), some wanton and sensual. The sculptural art of Mathura has many distinguishing features:

The material used is either red sandstone with creamish spots or buff sandstone, which sometimes contains dull red patches. In certain sculptures efforts to remove the adverse effect of spots or patches through the application of a coat of colour can be seen.

Brahmanism, Buddhism and Jainism flourished simultaneously at Mathura under the Kushans and icons and shrines of all the three sects were made in large numbers. While Brahmanism continued to be the religion of the masses, Buddhism received royal patronage, while Jainism had the following of the rich merchant community.

92. Vogel, 1910, p. 28.

93. Khan, 1966.

94. Dani, 1965/66, Plates XVIII, 4–5.

95. Agrawala, 1965, p. 3.

96. Vogel, 1911/12, pp. 120–7.

97. Rosenfield, 1967, pp. 135–53.

98. Vogel, 1930, p. 91, Plate V; Rosenfield, 1967, pp. 144–51.

99. Vogel, 1930, Plate V; Rosenfield, 1967, pp. 144 et seq.

100. Rowland, 1970, p. 149.



FIG. 34. Śālabhañjikā figure on the obverse side of a pillar. Second century A.D. (From H. Zimmer, *The Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. II, plate 74a, New York, 1968.)

In this period symbols representing the Buddha in earlier times were replaced by the anthropomorphic representation.

The religious aspects of art had not obliterated its secular spirit. Skilled workers and artisans worked for patrons of different creeds according to demand. The spirit of secularism is seen in the depiction of decorative motifs, social and folk scenes common to all sects.

The assimilation of different artistic forms and their fusion into a distinctive style were the important features of the Mathura school. The natural reflection of contemporary social, religious and political movements has to be evaluated in proper perspective. Mathura art actually served as a



FIG. 35. Śālabhañjikā figure on a bracket. (From J. P. Vogel, *La Sculpture de Mathura*, plate XII, Paris/Brussels, 1930.)

bridge to correlate and unite indigenous and alien elements and successfully accomplished this through its adaptability, and its process of fusion, amalgamation and interaction.

The presentation of female beauty as a vehicle of art was a novel experiment of the Mathura school. In the earlier monuments of Bharhut and Sanchi womenfolk seem unconcerned with this. Their function is either to worship if represented in mundane form or to receive worship if elevated to the superhuman status of devatā or yakṣī. But in the Kushan period the sculptor at Mathura viewed feminine beauty from a different angle. Arrested by a beautiful face, long hair, heavy hips, voluptuous breasts,



graceful movements, attractive looks and inviting gestures, he transformed his subject into sculptural creations that blended the fervour of sensuous emotions in a religious and spiritual environment.

The names of artists of the Mathura school have been recorded on the pedestals of sculptures – Rāma, Dharma, Sanghadeva, Joṭisa, Dāsa, Śivara(kṣita), Siṅgha, Nāyasa, Deyahu, Vishnu and Jayakula.<sup>101</sup>

#### VISHNU

Early Brahmanism or Hinduism at Mathura was based on the Vishnu or Vāsudeva cult and Mathura artists made icons of Vishnu and his associates at an early stage. Vishnu figures have been found in different forms. The two-armed representation seems uncommon (Mathura Museum No. 1150). The four-armed images hold a mace (*gadā*), disc (*cakra*), waterpot (*kamandalu*), and the fourth hand either remains in protection (*abhaya*) or in boon-bestowing (*varada*) pose (Mathura Museum Nos. 15.912, 15.948, 28.1729 and 34.2520, second deity). Sometimes the mace is replaced by the conch (*śaṅkha*) (No. 15.4267). The lotus (*padma*) does not appear in this period. The eight-armed figures of Vishnu have hands that are broken so the attributes remain obscure (Nos. 15.1010 and 50.3550, and Lucknow Museum No. 49.247). In one sculpture the deity is seen mounted on his vehicle Garuda in bird form (No. 39.2858).

The concept of the incarnation of Vishnu was still in its infancy. The Lucknow Museum stela (No. J.610) probably shows the giant (*trivikrama* or *virāṭ*) form. The boar incarnation (*varāha*) has been identified in another stela (Mathura Museum No. 65.15) (Fig. 36). The deity is lifting the earth, which is seen personified on his left shoulder.<sup>102</sup> A fragmentary sculpture in the Mathura Museum (No. 17.1344) has been interpreted as Vāsudeva crossing the River Jamuna with a basket over his head.<sup>103</sup> Another stela (No. 19.1563) is probably to be identified as Rāma and Sitā.

The cosmic (*caturvyūha*) form of Vishnu is seen in an image of the Mathura Museum (No. 14.392-5) (Fig. 37). Out of the central deity, Vāsudeva or Krishna, emerge other figures from his shoulders and head. Balarāma can be recognized from the snake canopy. The high crown and *vanamālā* (garland made of forest leaves and flowers) of Vishnu are noteworthy.

#### BALARĀMA

The cult of Balarāma, the elder brother of Krishna, was already established at Mathura before the Kushans (Lucknow Museum No. G.215). In the Kushan

101. Sharma, 1984, p. 139.

102. Joshi, 1972, p. 7.

103. Ibid., p. 16.

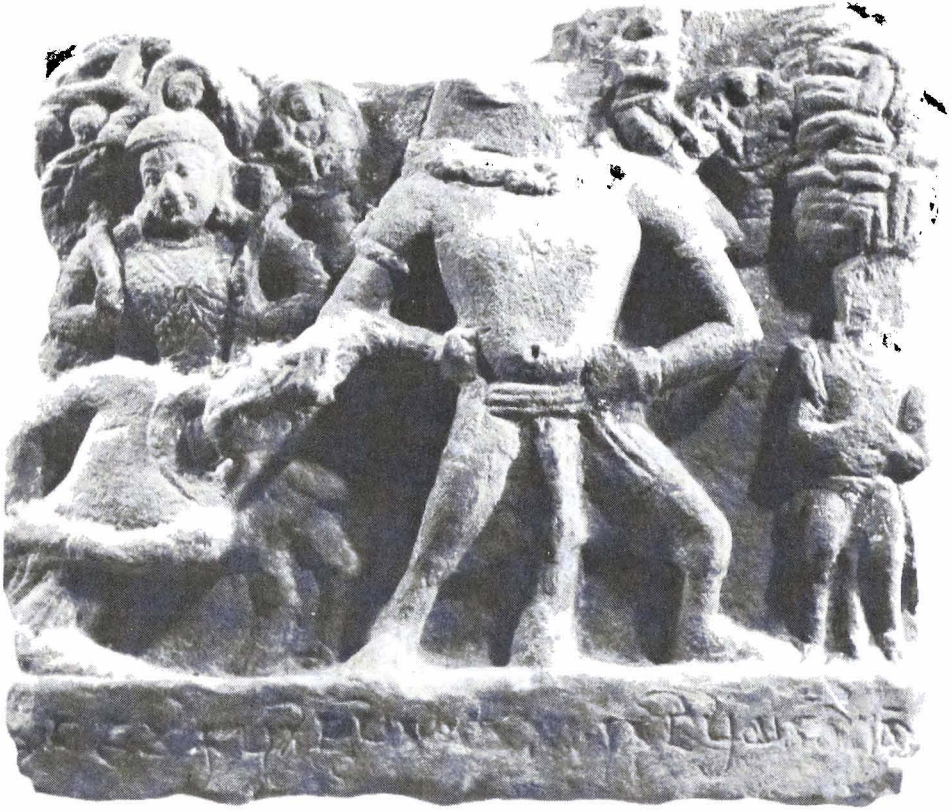


FIG. 36. Boar incarnation. Buff sandstone. Second century A.D. (length 35 cm).  
Mathura Museum No. 65.15.

period, figures of Balarāma have two or four arms holding a cup in the left hand with the right hand raised up in the protection pose (*abhaya mudrā*). Conceived as the incarnation of the cosmic serpent Śeṣa, Balarāma is shown with a snake canopy (Mathura Museum No. 14.406) (Fig. 38). Sometimes he carries a lion-staff plough (*siṃhalaṅgala bala*). Rarely, between Balarāma and Krishna, stands a female deity, identified as Ekānaṁśā, sister of the two brothers (Mathura Museum No. 67.529).

Numerous Śiva finds suggest that Mathura was also a seat of the Śiva cult. In the Kushan period Śiva is represented in two forms: *liṅga*, the phallic form with the nut portion projecting from the shaft and fastened with a flat band (Mathura Museum No. 83.3) (Fig. 39), and *puruṣa*, the anthropomorphic form. Quite often a combined aspect is seen and in this case the *liṅga* is shown with one, two, four or five faces. The beads known as *tatpuruṣa*, *aghora*, *vāmadeva*, *sadyojāta*, *iśāna* face east, south, west, north and upper direction respectively. The Ardhanārīśvara form (a composite figure of Śiva and his spouse Parvatī) is also from the Early Kushan period. In this form the right half is generally represented as male with matted hair, a half vertical third eye and the organ in an upward position (*ūrdhvaretas*). The left female half is shown as graceful with earrings and anklets (Mathura Museum No. 34.2520) (Fig. 40, first deity).



FIG. 37. Bust of Vāsudeva in cosmic (*vyūha*) form. Buff sandstone. Second century A.D. (height 45 cm). From Saptasamudrī well. Mathura Museum No. 14.392–5.

#### KĀRTTIKEYA

Skanda or Kārttikeya was also a favourite deity in Kushan Mathura. The texts describe him as son of Śiva (*Matsyapurāṇa*, Chapter 158, and *Kumārasambhava* of Kālidāsa 10.57–60) and also of Agni (*Mahābhārata*, *Vanaparva*, Chapters 225–30 and *Skandapurāṇa*, *Māheśvarakhaṇḍa*, Chapters 27–31). He is known as a god of war and commander of the divine army (*devasenani*). In the Kushan period he is shown as a two-armed young man, wearing a crown or turban, holding a long spear in his left hand with his right hand in the protection pose (Lucknow Museum No. 57.458). An image in the Mathura Museum (No. 42.2949) is dated Year 11. He is sometimes shown with a cock or a peacock (Mathura Museum No. 33.2332). A bronze plaque from Sonkh has been identified as Kārttikeya.<sup>104</sup> His nativity is sometimes shown with one or more mother

104. Härtel, 1976, p. 91, Fig. 34.





FIG. 38. Head of Balarāma with snake canopy. Buff sandstone. Second century A.D. (height 35.5 cm). From Kachahrighat well. Mathura Museum No. 14.406.

goddesses (*mātrkāś*), holding a child and with a jar (Lucknow Museum No. 0.250) (Fig. 41). Ganeśa, the younger brother of Kārttikeya, appears late in art; a post-Kushan statuette represents him as an elephant-headed nude dwarf, wearing a snake thread (*vyāla yajnopavita*) and eating sweet balls (*laddu*) with his trunk (Mathura Museum No. 15.758).

#### SURYA

The sun god (Surya) in the Kushan period is shown squatting in a car drawn by two horses, wearing an embroidered coat, trousers and turban, and holding a stalked lotus bud in his right and a dagger in his left hand. The whole appearance suggests an alien treatment as marked as on the contemporary royal portraits (Mathura Museum No. 12.269) (Fig. 42). These tight features are subsequently relaxed, the number of horses increases to four (No. D.46), and a nimbus resembling the disc of the sun is added. The wings on his shoulders recall the early Vedic concept of the sun bird Garuda.<sup>105</sup>

105. Banerjea, 1956, p. 434.

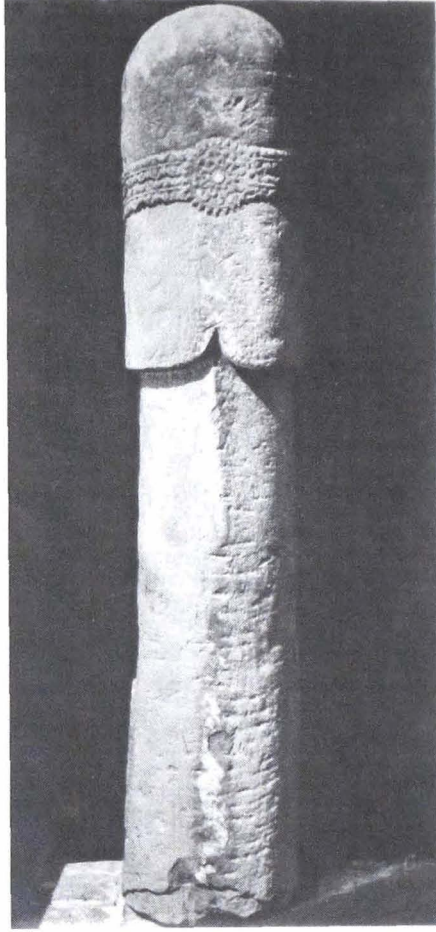


FIG. 39. Śivaliṅga. Near Kankali. Spotted red sandstone. First century A.D.  
Mathura Museum No. 83.3.

#### YAKṢAS

The dominating yakṣa cult of an earlier period at Mathura was overshadowed by other popular deities under the Kushans. The yakṣas, now grotesque and dwarfish with pot belly (No. C.3), served as attendants. Their mundane nature is depicted as excessive drinking (No. C.2), a scene sometimes explained as Bacchanalian, suggesting a Greek impact through Gandhāra art.<sup>106</sup>

#### NĀGAS

Nāga (snake) worship was prevalent at Mathura. We find independent images of the nāga deities in human form but surmounted by snake hoods. The site of Sonkh has revealed remains of a nāga shrine of Kushan date.

106. Smith, 1889, Part 1, pp. 140, 156.



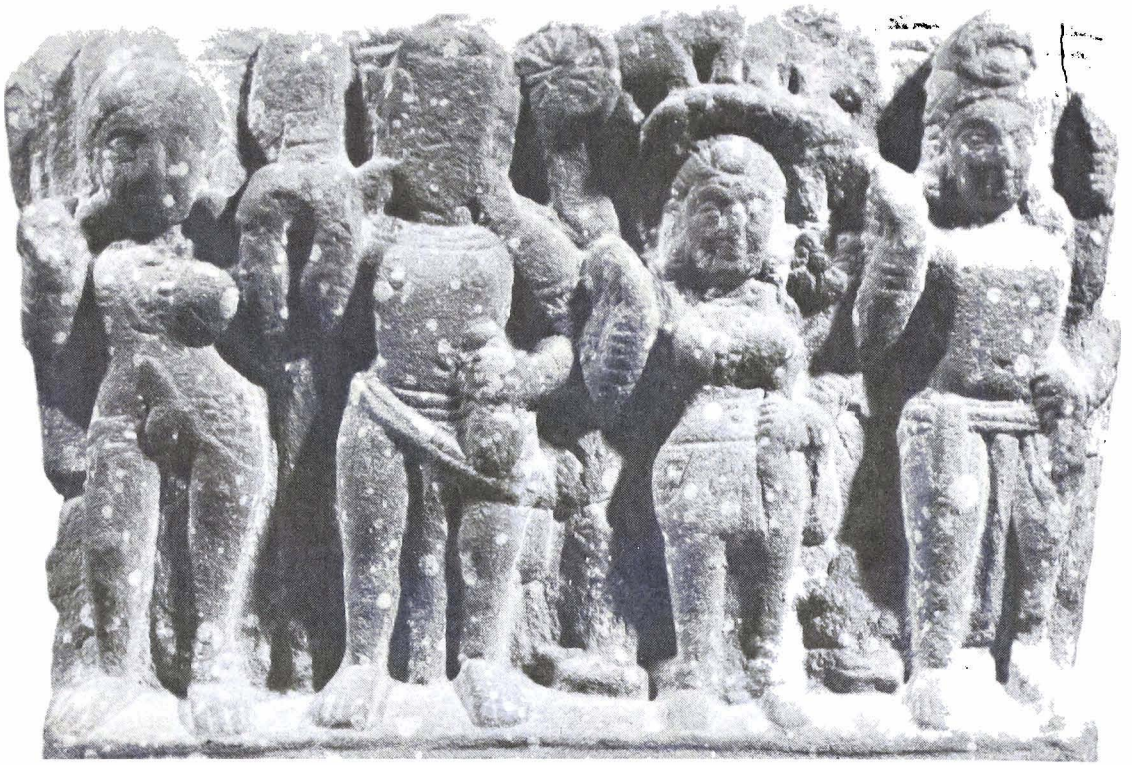


FIG. 40. Stela representing, from the left, Ardhanārīśvara, Vishnu, Gajalakṣmī and Kubera. Spotted red sandstone (length 26.5 cm). Mathura Museum No. 34.2520.

One lintel depicts the nāgas and nāgīs with a snake scalp, while the devotees or visitors bear the turban (No. SOIV-36) (Fig. 43). A duel between the nāga and Garuda (bird deity) has also been represented (No. 41.2915).

#### OTHER FIGURES

A large number of female deities or mother goddesses have been recovered from Mathura. Important ones are Gajalakṣmī (No. 34.2520) (Fig. 40 above, third deity), Lakṣmī, Hāritī, Yakṣīs, Mātṛkās, Śaṣṭhī and nāgīs. A popular goddess of the age was Durgā (No. 33.2317). A few sculptures from Mathura suggest that efforts were made to avoid disharmony between different sects. An interesting stela in the Mathura Museum (No. 34.2520) represents four deities together: Ardhanārīśvara, Vishnu, Gajalakṣmī and Kubera (the lord of the yakṣas).

#### JAINA FIGURES

The excavations conducted by A. Führer at the Kankali Mound, Mathura, yielded hundreds of Jaina antiquities, most of which are housed in the State





FIG. 41. Stela showing nativity of Kārttikeya. Buff sandstone. Second century A.D. (length 24 cm). Lucknow Museum No. 0.250.

Museum in Lucknow.<sup>107</sup> These range from the second century B.C. to the twelfth century A.D., but the majority belong to the Kushan period. The āyāgapāṭas serve as the base for the development of the Jaina pantheon; some of them belong to pre-Kushan times and one records the name of the *mahākṣatrapa* Śoḍaṣa (Lucknow Museum No. J.1).

The āyāgapāṭas according to the central theme may be classified differently, that is, *Cakrapāṭa* (representing the wheel, J.255), *Svastikapāṭa* (representing auspicious cross J.252), *Caityapāṭa* (showing the stupa or caitya, J.255; see Fig. 44), with a beautiful railing and gateway flanked by two female dancers and an inscription recording that the stone tablet was set up by the wife of the dancer Phalguyasa for the worship of Arhata, and the *arhatapāṭa* or *tīrthaṅkarapāṭa* when the Jina (main deity; see Fig. 45) is shown, replacing the symbol (J. 252). Some of these tablets show a variety of beautiful motifs depicted as eight auspicious symbols (*aṣṭamaṅgalacinhas*).

107. Smith, 1901.





FIG. 42. Surya clad in northern style. Buff sandstone. From Kankali Mound.  
Late first century A.D. (height 48 cm). Mathura Museum No. 12.269.



FIG. 43. Lintel showing the scene of nāga family. Red sandstone. From Sonkh. A.D. 100  
(length 121 cm). Mathura Museum No. SOIV-36.



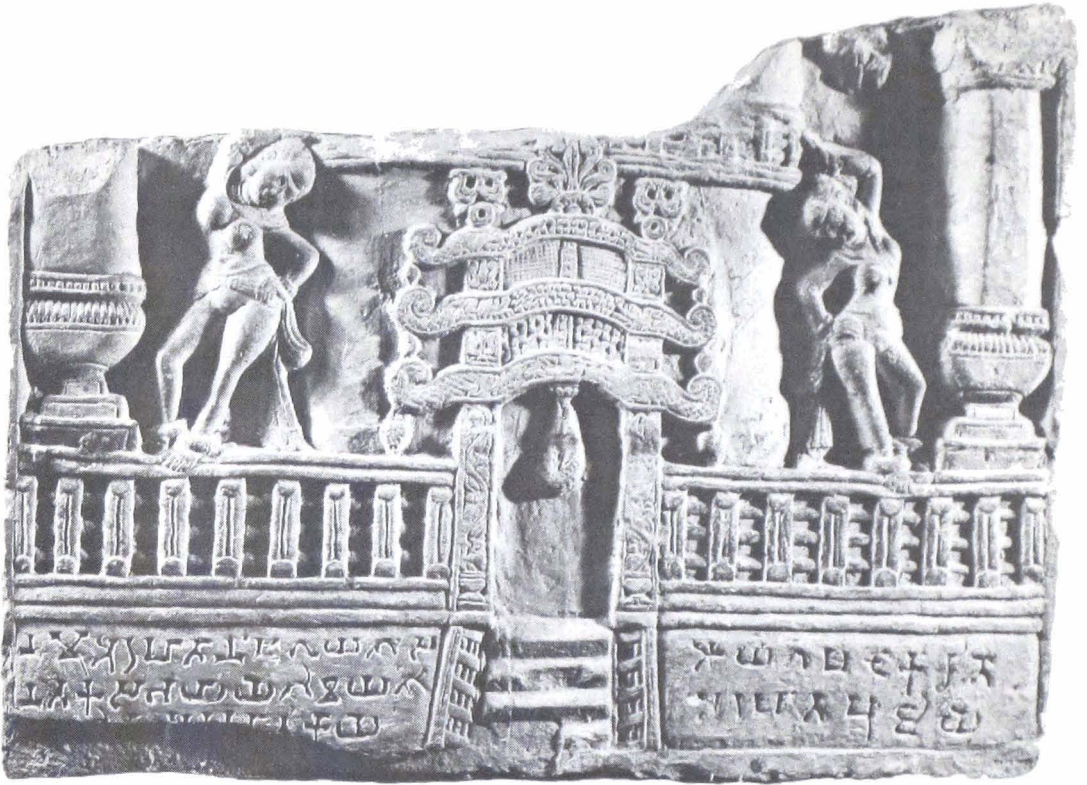


FIG. 44. Inscribed ayāgapata carved with stupa railing. Buff and red sandstone.  
From Kankali Mound (50 × 70 cm). Lucknow Museum No. J.255.

Jina images of the Kushan period are generally broad-chested, stiff, with shaven head or little hair. The mark of *śrīvatsa* on the chest of a Jina is an essential feature at Mathura. Palms and soles are usually marked with a *triratna* or *cakra* as the mark of a great man (*mahāpuruṣalakṣana*). In the early period the halo is plain, devoid of any concentric band but carved with a scalloped border (*hastinakha*). With the passage of time the decoration on the field of the halo increases (Fig. 46).

It is not possible to identify all the Jinās of the Kushan period, because we do not know what developed subsequently. Rṣabhanātha can, however, be identified by the fall of hair on the shoulders, and Pārśva or Supārśva by the snake canopy. The depiction of life events of Jinās is rare, but a Kushan-period stela has been explained as illustrating the episode of the transfer of the embryo of the last Jina Mahāvīra from the womb of Brāhmaṇī Devananandā to that of Kṣatriyāṇī Triśalā (No. J.626). Neminātha, the twenty-second Jina, who is described as cousin of Krishna, was represented flanked by Balarāma and Krishna.



FIG. 45. Head of Tīrthaṅkara. Second century A.D. (From H. Zimmer, *The Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. II, plate 73, New York, 1968.)

#### BUDDHIST SCULPTURES

Kushan art of Mathura earned its real fame in producing hundreds of excellent Buddhist images, which were both installed in Mathura region and exported. Before the Buddha was represented in human form, his presence was conveyed through different symbols: the elephant for his Birth; the horse for the Great Renunciation; the tree for his Enlightenment; the wheel for turning the Wheel of Law; and the stupa for his Death. The credit of introducing the Buddha figure is sometimes given to Gandhāra and sometimes to Mathura, but there is some evidence that the evolution of the Buddha figure at Mathura came slightly before the commencement of Kushan rule.<sup>108</sup>

108. Lohuizen-de Leeuw, 1949, p. 171.





FIG. 46. Inscribed *Sarvatobhadra* (quadruple) Jaina image with Pārśvanath on one side each. Red sandstone. From Kankali Mound (height 54 cm). Lucknow Museum No. J.235.

Pre-Kanishka Buddha figures are characterized by the snail shell (*kaparda*) on the head, inconspicuous drapery marked by an incised line on the left shoulder, a deep navel, and a pedestal with three tiers or two lions supporting the seat.

The Buddha's corpulent body has a crude, primitive and archaic look. In due course a set formula and an ideal form of the Buddha was developed. He is shown in high relief, with a nimbus bearing a scalloped border, a back slab showing foliage of the bodhi tree, two celestials hovering in the sky and acolytes flanking the deity. The top of his hair is shaped like a snail shell, the rest of his head being smooth. He has small earlobes, a circular (*ūrṇā*) mark on his forehead, almond-shaped, wide-open eyes and a slightly smiling expression.<sup>109</sup> A good example is the Buddha from the Katra Mound (Fig. 47).

109. Sharma, 1984, pp. 176–7.





FIG. 47. Buddha inscribed as Bodhisattva. Spotted red sandstone. Late first century A.D.  
From Katra Mound (height 71 cm). Mathura Museum No. A.1.





FIG. 48. Buddha with drapery covering both shoulders. Spotted sandstone.  
Second century A.D. (height 81 cm). Mathura Museum No. A.4.

During the reign of Huvishka the Mathura school introduced a notable change in the Buddha's drapery, which now covers both shoulders (*ubhayānsika saṅghātī*) (Mathura Museum No. A.4) (Fig. 48), and then becomes thick and stiff with broad pleats (Mathura Museum No. 76.17) (Fig. 49).<sup>110</sup> The distinction between the Buddha and the Bodhisattva is now made clear – the Buddha being shown as a monk while the Bodhisattva is adorned with a crown and the ornaments lending him a princely look (Lucknow Museum No. B.26) (Fig. 50). Beside the protection (*abhaya*) pose, others are now introduced: meditation (*dhyāna*); earth touching (*bhūmisparśa*); preaching or teaching (*upa-deśa* or *vyākhyāna*); and turning the wheel of law (*dharmacakrapravartana*). The Buddhist pantheon grew manifold.

110. Sharma, 1984, pp. 220–3.



FIG. 49. Buddha with Gandhāra influence on cloth. Spotted red sandstone.  
Second century A.D. From Govindnagar (height 115 cm).  
Mathura Museum No. 76.17.

#### IMPACT

The sculptural art of Mathura in the Kushan period was extremely creative (Figs. 51–56), and its products were in heavy demand throughout ancient northern India. Mathura borrowed several features from Gandhāra, but contributed much in return. The *Jātaka* narration, the lotus seat, the drapery covering one shoulder of the Buddha and the lion throne were some of the important Mathura features later adopted in Gandhāra. The second phase of development at





FIG. 50. Crowned Bodhisattva head. Spotted red sandstone. Second century A.D.  
From Kankali Mound (height 50 cm). Lucknow Museum No. B.26.

Amaravati owes much to Mathura, notably the change from the aniconic to the anthropomorphic representation of the Buddha; the impact of Gandhāra at Amaravati came through the Mathura school;<sup>111</sup> and the Sarnath school, which flourished in the Gupta period, developed from the Late Kushan art of Mathura.<sup>112</sup>

111. Coomaraswamy, 1965, pp. 70, 71.

112. Saraswati, 1975, p. 135; Sharma, 1984, p. 241.





FIG. 53. Railpost showing a woman fastening her garment.  
Red sandstone. First-second century A.D. From Bhuteswar (height 142 cm).  
Mathura Museum No. J.4.



FIG. 54. Bracket from a gate of the nāga shrine with a woman under a tree.  
Spotted red sandstone. From Sonkh (height 77.5 cm).  
Mathura Museum No. SOIV-27.



FIG. 55. Railpost showing Rṣyaśringa in ecstasy. Spotted red sandstone.  
First-second century A.D. From Chaubara Mound (height 80 cm).  
Mathura Museum No. J.7.





FIG. 56. Parasol carved with lotus and auspicious motifs.  
Spotted red sandstone. From Maholi-ki-paur ( $111 \times 105$  cm).  
Mathura Museum No. 76.12.

## LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE IN THE KUSHAN EMPIRE\*

*J. Harmatta*

### An unknown language in an unknown script

Since 1954 a striking series of linguistic documents written in an unknown language and in an unknown script have come to light in the territory of Central Asia of the Graeco-Bactrian and the Kushan periods. The following documents are known:

1. *Surkh Kotal*, three lines, written with black ink on a small fragment of stone.
2. *Dasht-i Nawur*, stone inscription, nine lines.
3. *Khalchayan*, one inscription on a potsherd, another on a tile.
4. *Kara-tepe*, three fragmentary inscriptions on potsherds.
5. *Ay Khanum*, inscription on a silver ingot.
6. *Issik* (50 km to the east of Alma Ata), inscription on a silver cup.
7. *Khatin-Rabat* (in southern Tajikistan), fragmentary inscription on a potsherd.
8. *Tekkuz-tepe* (in southern Tajikistan), inscription on a potsherd, unpublished.
9. *Old Merv*, inscription(s?) on a potsherd, unpublished.
10. *Fayaz-tepe* (near Termez), several inscriptions on earthenware, unpublished.
11. *Kafirigan-tepe* (40 km to the south of Dushanbe), fragment of a wall inscription (?), unpublished.

Consequently, the spread of this unknown script and language covers a vast territory from Alma Ata up to Merv, Dasht-i Nawur and Ay Khanum.

There have been speculations about the character and ethnic background of the script, but only one suggestion really deserves consideration – the theory that the script goes back to the Kharoṣṭhī alphabet and the language written in

\* See Map 4.



this script may be a Saka dialect, perhaps also spoken by the Kushans. In fact, in spite of the similarity of several letters to the characters of the Orkhon–Yenisey Türk runic script, it is clear that the number and shape of the letters, the system of vowel mātṛās and the presence of compound akṣaras prove without any doubt the Kharoṣṭhī origin of the alphabet. The coincidence of some akṣaras with runic characters is restricted to the cases where the Aramaic prototypes of both the Kharoṣṭhī and the Sogdian letters (the latter serving as models for the Türk runic signs) were similar.

If we tentatively substitute the syllabic values of the Kharoṣṭhī alphabet, the resulting text has a Saka character. So one of the two inscriptions from Khalchayan, containing only one compound akṣara, can be read as *lya*. This reading can be interpreted as a personal name and compared to the well-known Saka name *Liaka* (cf. Khotanese Saka *rya* ‘young’). The reading of the other inscription from Khalchayan is more uncertain because it is not clear whether it is to be read in the position given by the publication or upside down. In the first case, its reading may be *jha-yi-ka* (i.e. \**Zayika*, a name to be compared with the Middle Iranian name *Zīk*); in the second, it can be read as *<sup>l</sup>ja(m)-<sup>l</sup>mi(m)-pa(m)* (i.e. \**Zāmipa*, similarly a name, representing the same type as *Denipa*). Both names could be, however, equally of Saka origin.

One fragment from Kara-tepe can be read as *]<sup>l</sup>si(m)-m<sup>l</sup>si[* and connected with Khotanese Saka *ṣimja* ‘the thorny jujube’ used for preparing juice in Khotan. The other fragment from Kara-tepe may be read as *]<sup>l</sup>nā(m)-sā(m) kṣa[*, i.e. *]<sup>l</sup>nāsā kṣa[* ‘[portion six]’ and *nāsā* may be the same word as Khotanese Saka *nasā-* ‘portion’, while *kṣa[* can be compared to Khotanese Saka *kṣa*, *kṣāṣa* ‘six’. Nor is the fragmentary text from Khatīn Rabat longer: *e 1 yo[sa* ‘whole [is] 1 musk’, *e* being equal to Khotanese Saka *ī* (one, whole), and the spelling *yo[sa* representing the same word as Khotanese Saka *yausa* ‘musk’.

The texts of the inscriptions from Dasht-i Nawur and Surkh Kotal are rather long and reading them presents great difficulties because of their being poorly preserved. Line 1 of the inscription of Dasht-i Nawur (DN III) can tentatively be read as follows: *sa-<sup>l</sup>li<sup>l</sup> mi paṃ-ja-sa <sup>l</sup>bra<sup>l</sup>-ka-ṣim mi ma-ste <sup>l</sup>paṃ-ju<sup>l</sup>-sa <sup>l</sup>ha<sup>l</sup>-ḍa* ‘The year [is] now 50, Brakaśi [is] now the month, 15 days’. To illustrate the character of the language, we may compare the same text in Khotanese Saka (in Brāhmī orthography) with it:

Dasht-i Nawur: *sali mi paṃjasa brakaśim mi maste paṃjusa haḍa*

Khotanese Saka: *salä mī paṃjsāsä braṃkḥaysji mī māstā paṃjsūsa haḍa.*

The similarity is obvious and if the proposed reading of the date proves to be correct, it follows that the Southern Sakas (or the Kushans) had a knowledge of the month names used also in Khotan and of the time reckoning by cycles of sixty years or by another era, different from the one used in the Bactrian inscription (DN I) of Dasht-i Nawur.

The text of lines 2–9 of the inscription DN III runs as follows:

2. *ye rva-da-ti ri a-[ja]-ti vi(m)-ja-rka ka-<sup>1</sup>tvi-sa' [ku]-ša-ṇa*
3. *mi mri pa(m)-ra-mmi-na sta-naṃ pa(m)-ri-vāṃ śi-ḍa va-<sup>1</sup>ri' kām hām*
4. *sa gra-vāṃ ti-rma da-bha sa-di pa ka(m)-pi-sa(m) śa-di-ṇa*
5. *ha-mri(m)-ja kaṃ-<sup>1</sup>d'a vaṃ-yi-ṇām kaṃ-ju-vāṃ śi-kṣa-si dha-kaṃ*
6. *jhaṃ-saṃ ka-<sup>1</sup>d'a ta-rma pa a-jaṃ naṃ-vāṃ ha-mri-ka sa-ṇa śi-jha*
7. *mri-kaṃ śi kaṃ-<sup>1</sup>ju-vāṃ mi-<sup>1</sup>[śta ha-ra]-<sup>1</sup>sta' ha-mi ha-mi ha-ya-ḍa ja-sta ha-sa*
8. *he-ko mri(m)-ka mi ho-kaṃ jyom pa-pāṃ-sa vāṃ-ta haṃ-mi-ga-śa*
9. *mḷa ka-ṇa e-śi haṃ-da-ḍa' paṃ-mri pu-<sup>1</sup>da' taṃ-ka u-da <sup>1</sup>da-ri ja'-rmi 'ja'-sta ja.*

On the basis of the far-reaching agreement of the language of this inscription with Khotanese Saka and with the aid of its Bactrian version (see later) its text can be interpreted in the following way:

2. Behold! [We] King of Kings, the noble, great Katvisa, the Kuṣāṇa,
3. now, here, we order to erect the commanded text for the welfare as heroic words:
4. He [Katvisa] mounted on the mountains, [he] was able to cross the high region. He inspected Kāpiśa.
5. [He] put relief to [his] advancing domestics, moved forward [his] forces,
6. fought a battle, crossed the region, pursued, captured the crushed Sanas [= Avestan *Sāini-*], destroyed [them].
7. Graciously he rested [his] servants, he offe[red] pres[ents] to all of them. He celebrated a feast for the god,
8. being devoted and gracious. Then he held feastings for the officers and the warriors altogether.
9. He ordered to engrave on the rock the favourable report [that] he removed the tax and contribution from [the sanctuary of] the supreme god.

The content of this inscription coincides in all essential details with that of the Bactrian version (discussed below) of the epigraphic monument at Dasht-i Nawur. However, a remarkable phenomenon is that the relation of this inscription is much more detailed than the Bactrian text. Obviously, the most important version of the report about the campaign led by Vima Kadphises to the region of Dasht-i Nawur was represented precisely by this text. From the repeated mentions of the domestics, their rewards, and the festive banquet given in honour of the officers and warriors, it follows that this was the language spoken and understood in the royal court of Vima Kadphises and among his retinue and army, whether this was some Saka dialect adopted by the Kushans or the original language of the Kushans themselves. The central position and the detailed text of this inscription clearly speak in favour of the latter assumption.

Another interesting document, written in the same language and with the same script, is represented by the inscription from Surkh Kotal. The character of the record is striking. It was written in black ink on a stone fragment, meas-

uring  $22.5 \times 11 \times 4.9$  cm. This fact excludes the possibility of an official document and renders the assumption of an occasional record probable. The text of the inscription, also coming very likely from the Kushan age, can tentatively be read as follows:

1. *hi-yo e-se ho ta-na: mva-ra ha-mu-di a-ja hi-rya pa-si da-pa va-rya*
2. *ka-vā-gyo ja-rya da-ja ho-la cha-da gyo-rmi va-gyo dha-na cha-ka mo-sa ja-na*
3. *va-hi da-hu dam-na.*

Contrary to the inscription of Dasht-i Nawur, here we have no support for the understanding of this text. In spite of this apparent difficulty, however, the interpretation is not impossible because some terms and phrases can clearly be identified again with the aid of Khotanese Saka. Thus, the inscription can be interpreted in the following way:

1. The lord gives orders so: The procedure happened. It is possible to release the non-perished wealth: the mantle,
2. the coat of mail, the armour, the flame[-coloured] covering, the miler excellent racehorse, the grain, the goat will you quickly carry away!
3. The house is given to the man [or to Dahu].

This text obviously represents a report on a judgement about the division of property either in the case of divorce or by way of inheritance: one party obtained the movable wealth (the things enumerated in the report), the other one kept the immovable property (the house). This report was apparently sent by a person who belonged to the retinue of the 'lord' exercising the jurisdiction and who was personally acquainted with at least one of the parties. The use of the stone fragment for the purpose of this information is probably due to the lack of other writing materials in Surkh Kotal at that time.

All the records written in this variant of Kharoṣṭhī script and Saka language discussed so far date back to the Kushan age. Two inscriptions of this type, however, represent an earlier period. The inscription of Ay Khanum, engraved on a silver ingot, comes probably from the second half of the second century B.C., while the inscribed silver cup from Issik was dated to the sixth-fourth centuries B.C. Nevertheless, there can be hardly any doubt that the latter dating is too early. Taking into consideration the fact that the inscription from Issik cannot be separated from other inscriptions of this type and that it clearly presents the characteristics of the Kharoṣṭhī script, it cannot be dated before the second half or the end of the third century B.C. In any case, these two inscriptions present more archaic, more angular, simpler letter forms than the other.

Even though some of these features may be ascribed to the writing technique (engraving), they still indicate an earlier date.

The text of the silver ingot from Ay Khanum can be read as follows:

*a-l-za-to mi-pa-zaṃ-na pa-ya a-mi-zaṃ-na pe | pa-ya-di-na | [ . . .*

Silver: smelt sort, mixed, greenish [?] | examined | [weight . . .

The text is probably incomplete as the end of the record is broken off.

The term *alzato* (silver) exactly coincides with Khotanese Saka *āljsata-* (silver) but except *amizaṃna* (< Old Iranian \**āmaiča-na-*, Middle Persian *āmēxtan* ‘to mix’ all words or stems also occur in Khotanese Saka.

The inscription on the silver cup from Issik can tentatively be transcribed again in the following way:

1. *za(ṃ)-ri ko-la(ṃ) mi(ṃ)-vaṃ vaṃ-va pa-zaṃ pa-na de-ka mi(ṃ)-ri-to*

The vessel should hold wine of grapes, added cooked food, so much, to the mortal,

2. *ṇa-ka mi pa-zaṃ vaṃ-va va-za(ṃ)-na vaṃ*

then added cooked fresh butter on.

The vocabulary of this inscription, too, has quite exact parallels in Khotanese Saka: *za(ṃ)ri* ‘vessel’ ~ Khotanese Saka *jsarā* ‘receptacle’, *kola* ‘grapes’ ~ Khotanese Saka *kūra* ‘grapes’, Vedic *kola* ‘jujube’, *mi(ṃ)va-* ‘wine’ ~ Khotanese Saka *meva*, *māya-* ‘intoxicant drink’, *vaṃva* ‘added’ (< \**ava-nava-*) ~ Khotanese Saka *puṇvāṇa-* ‘to be inserted’ (< \**pati-nava-nya-*), *pazaṃ* ‘cooked’ ~ Khotanese Saka *pajs-* ‘to cook’, *pa<ṃ>na* ‘food’ ~ Khotanese Saka *paṃna-* ‘food’, *deka* ‘so much’ ~ Khotanese Saka *deka* ‘so much’, *mi(ṃ)rita* ‘mortal’ (< \**mry-ata-*) ~ Khotanese Saka *mār-* (< \**mrya-*) ‘to die’, *ṇaka* ‘fresh butter’ ~ Khotanese Saka *nīyaka-* ‘fresh butter’, *mi* ‘then, now’ ~ Khotanese Saka *mi* ‘now, then’, *vaz-* ‘to hold’ ~ Khotanese Saka *vaj-/vāj-* ‘to hold’, *va(ṃ)* ‘to, on, for’ ~ Khotanese Saka *va* ‘for’.

On the basis of these texts and of the close parallels between them and Khotanese Saka linguistic data, it is easy to recognize the close relationship of the two languages. In spite of some uncertainties in the reading and interpretation of these texts, written in a variant of the Kharoṣṭhī script, there can be hardly any doubt about the essential features of their language. They clearly represent a language of Saka type with some peculiar features. The question remains, however, whether the language of these texts was a Southern Saka dialect also adopted for their chancelleries by the Kushans or whether it represents the original language of the Kushans, which was closely related to the Saka dialects.



## The Bactrian language in Greek script

The importance of Hellenism in Central Asia may be best illustrated by the fact that the Greek alphabet was adopted to write the Bactrian language. Earlier, it was generally assumed that Bactrian literacy came into existence under the Kushan king Kanishka I, because it was under his rule that the Kushan mints struck coins with partly Greek and partly Bactrian legends, written using Greek characters. In 1967, however, a trilingual inscription of Vima Kadphises was discovered at Dasht-i Nawur, one version of which was written in the Bactrian language using the Greek alphabet. It thus became clear that Bactrian literacy dates back to the time of Vima Kadphises or perhaps even earlier.

The Greek alphabet of Bactria was adapted with its contemporary sound values to the phonetic system of Bactrian. Thus, the Greek spellings  $\epsilon\iota$  and  $\omicron\upsilon$  were used to denote Bactrian  $\bar{i}$  and  $\bar{u}$  respectively. The differences between the Greek and Bactrian phonetic systems, however, necessitated some changes in the sound values of the Greek letters, for example sigma ( $\sigma$ ,  $\varsigma$ ) denoted beside  $s$  also  $\acute{s}$  and Greek zeta ( $\zeta$ ) had the sound values  $z$  and  $\acute{j}$ . In Bactrian Greek the consonant cluster  $ks$  became assimilated to  $ss$ ,  $s$ . Consequently, the Greek letter  $\xi$  ( $\xi$ ) was not suitable to represent Bactrian  $x\acute{s}$ . Therefore, the consonant  $\chi$  ( $\chi$ ) and the newly created  $\varsigma$  ( $b$ ) were introduced to denote this Bactrian consonant cluster. A striking peculiarity of the Bactrian alphabet is the new sign  $\flat$  for Bactrian  $\varsigma$  and the use of Greek upsilon ( $\upsilon$ ) for Bactrian  $h$ .

Bactrian writing was widely used throughout the Kushan Empire both for official purposes and for everyday life. Accordingly, there are several types of records in Bactrian writing: (a) stone inscriptions; (b) wall inscriptions; (c) inscriptions on objects; (d) coin legends; and (e) seal inscriptions. The most important sites of Bactrian inscriptions are: (a) Surkh Kotal with six stone inscriptions; (b) Kara-tepe with inscriptions on potsherds (the short wall inscriptions, numbering about 100, were scratched on the corridor walls by visitors to the sanctuary during the Sasanian age; (c) Dasht-i Nawur with two stone inscriptions; (d) Dilberjin with two stone inscriptions from the Kushan period (some wall inscriptions and ostraca are of post-Kushan date); and (e) Ayrтам with one stone inscription.

According to the evidence of the Bactrian inscriptions known so far, it was the Kushan king Vima Kadphises who first had monumental rock or stone inscriptions prepared. Of his inscriptions, that of Dasht-i Nawur (DN I) seems to be the earliest. Consisting of thirteen lines containing 246 letters, the inscription was engraved on a rock at a height of 4,320 m in the mountains. Its text can be read and interpreted in the following way:

1. ΣΟΘ ΓΟΡΠΑΙΟΥ ΙΕ

[Era-year] 279, 15th [day of the month] Gorpaios.

2. βαονανο βαο ι αζαδο  
King of Kings, the noble,
3. οαζορχο Οοημο Τακπισο  
great Ooemo Takpiso,
4. κοβανο ι μαυοζινιγο ι λαδο-  
the Kuṣāṇa protégé of the moon [god], the right-
5. γο ι βαγο οζολαδο ειδο  
eous, the Majesty had this prepared,
6. χοζογαργο αβο ζαχφαςο  
he, the benefactor for the welfare.
7. Οοημο βαο ασο Ανδηζο ατο  
King Ooemo came both here from
8. μαλο αγαδο ατηο Σανιγε  
Andezo and the Sanigos
9. νομορδανδο οδο μαλο  
were destroyed by him. And here
10. φρομαδο Ανδηζο πορσο  
he ordered: 'Be the tax paid by Andezo
11. βοοηιο χιβδο αβο βαγανο  
its own for the sanctuary
12. οδο ιαζαδο ι καρισαρο αβο αμειγο  
and the warlike divinity for ever!'
13. ατο οτανο μολο χοανδο  
For that because he was called by them here.

As can be seen, the content of the Bactrian inscription (DN I) agrees with the Kushan version (DN III) discussed above in all essential points. The epigraphic record was prepared to commemorate the crossing of the high mountains and the victory won by Vima Kadphises when he came from Andezo (Qunduz) over the Sāinis (*Sanige* in the Bactrian text, *Sanā* in the Kushan version) dwelling in the region. The date of the inscription is '[Year] 279, 15th [day of the month] Gorpiaios'. Very likely, the era concerned is the so-called Graeco-Bactrian or Eucratides era, beginning with the accession of Eucratides about 170 B.C. The last epigraphic record of Vima Kadphises dating from the same era is

the unfinished inscription of Surkh Kotal (discussed below) from Year 299. Obviously, this inscription was left unfinished because of the death of Vima, so that Year 299 may correspond to the year before the accession of Kanishka. Accordingly, the date of DH I would approximately correspond to a day in September A.D. 113 and the accession of Eucratides would be in 166 B.C.

The date of the Kushan inscription of Dasht-i Nawur (DN III) is consistent with this: like Gorpaios, *Brakaśi* is an autumn month and if Year 50 represents the fiftieth year of a sixty-year cycle, it would fall in A.D. 113 according to the Chinese sixty-year cycle time-reckoning and in A.D. 117 according to the Indian one. The former conversion exactly corresponds with the date of the Bactrian inscription DN I. Hence, the Kushans probably became acquainted with the Chinese sixty-year cycle while they were still in their ancient home in Gansu.

The other Bactrian inscription of Dasht-i Nawur is hardly legible and is still to be deciphered, but all five inscriptions of this site were probably engraved at the same time and can be ascribed to Vima Kadphises.

At the Dilberjin site several epigraphic fragments were found which belong to two inscriptions. Their texts are rather fragmentary: in inscription 1 only one complete word has been preserved, while in inscription 2 no complete sentence can be found. In spite of the fragmentary state of both inscriptions, their texts can tentatively be restored and their contents roughly understood. The name of Vima can probably be recognized in both records.

Consisting of at least ten lines and of 200–220 letters, the tentatively restored text of inscription D 1 runs as follows:

1. [. . . . .]  
[Era-year . . . . . [day of month] . . .]
2. [Ἰαονανο Ἰαο ι αζαδο]  
[King of Kings, the noble,]
3. [οαζορχο Οοη]μοι [Τακπισο]  
[great Ooe]mo [Takpiso,]
4. [κοῖονο ι] λαδε[ιγο ι βαγο]  
[the Kuṣāṇa, the] right[cous, the Lord]
5. [ειδο πιδογαρο] σαγδο [αβο Οηβο]  
[had this image] prepared [to Oeṣo]
6. [οδο φρομαδο ι]θα α'τ'[ανο κιδο]  
[and he ordered] thus that [by them who]
7. [αβο μαλι]ζι βαγα[νοβιδο οδο]  
[is in the fort]ress pries[t and]

8. [κιδο μαλο] ναχσε'υ[ροβιδο βαγο]  
[who is here master of] the hunt [, care]
9. [λαγγο πιδορι]'χσ'ηο οδ[ο ποροοαο]  
[should be] taken [for the sanctuary] and
10. [σηο πιδο ι β]'ο'ργ'ο' ο[δο ι ληνο]  
[the cult should be performed according to the] rite [and the religion].

The inscription was discovered in the sanctuary lying in the north-eastern corner of the Dilberjin fortress and decorated with a wall-painting representing Śiva and Parvatī. The wall-painting was prepared in the reign of Vima Kadphises.

The other inscription from Dilberjin consists of at least twenty-four lines comprising about fifty letters each. Thus, it must have had altogether about 1,200 letters and represented the most considerable Bactrian epigraphic text known so far. Unfortunately, in the three fragments discovered only 442 letters, that is, about a third of the original text, have been preserved. Happily, important terms such as φαρο, αβ[ο], σαδ[ο], αβο ι ωραο[νο] and [ωρα]ονο μο ι αβγο 'abundant water', 'well', 'waterflow' clearly reveal the main topics of the inscription: the water supply of the Dilberjin stronghold and sanctuary. It seems that the stronghold was at first provided with water from a source lying outside the walls where later a sardoba was built. When the water of the source began to fail, a well was dug in the bastion flanking the gate and the use of the water was strictly regulated. These and other measures were apparently taken by order of King Vima Kadphises. In view of the rather fragmentary state of the inscription, its text can only partly and tentatively be restored.

The conjecturally completed text of the inscription runs as follows:

1. [χ'ονο . . . . . βαγο βαονανο βαο ι αζαδο οαζορχο]  
[Era-year . . . , . . . [day of the month] . . . King of Kings, the noble, great]
2. 'Οοη'μο 'Τα'[κπισο κο'βανο ι μαυοζινιγο ι λαδογο ειδο βαγολαγγο]  
'Ooe'm'o Ta'[kpiso, the Kuṣāṇa, protégé of the moon [god], the lord dedicated this sanctuary]
3. αβο Οη'βο [ι βορζαοανδο ιαζαδο . . . . .]  
to Oēšo, [the exalted divinity . . . . .]
4. οισπα ανα[γρο . . . . .]  
the eter[nal lord of] the universe [. . . . .]
5. οισπο σα[σταρο λαδο τα καλδο μαλιζο φρογιρδο ταδηιο καρανο ο]  
Ma[ster of] all beings. [At that time, when the fortress was completed, there was no pure]



6. δο φαρo αβ[ο νιστο χoτο ταδι ασο μαλιζo αβαβγο φροχορτο Oη|-]  
and abundant water [in it to drink. Then, the god Oēšo wanted to leave the waterless fortress,]
7. o βαγο σιδι αβ[ο βαγoλαγγο ασο ανο χα]νο α[βο oαστηο ταδι ασο]  
In order [to conduct the water from the old spr]ing to [the sanctuary, then]
8. 'Oζην'η βoορο o[αρζιγε oδο κιρωγε oαστι]νδο κα[λδι μο βoο Oοημο]  
[from] the land Ujjayinī w[orkers and artisans] were led here. When [King Ooēmo]
9. [Tox]'μο'δανε α[βαρμαγγο μαλο ζιδο ταδ]ηo σαδ[ο μο ανδαρο φροοαρο]  
[sent Tox]modane as su[perintendent here, then] he [had] a well [dug in the bastion]
10. [κανδο] oδο ζ[ιδο μο ωραονο ι αβγο ασο] ανο χ[ανο αβο μαλιζo ιθα ατι  
and [he had the running water] con[ducted from the old spring to the fortress so that]
11. [αβο μαλιζo καρανο oδο φαρo αβο μα γασηο oδο ταδι] 'Oη'[βο βαγο]  
[the abundant and pure water should not be missing in the fortress and then the god] Oē[šo should]
12. [ασο βαγoλαγγο μα φροχαβηοο oδο καλδι ειρο μα πα]'δη'o α[τι καρo-]  
[not want to leave the sanctuary and even when the waterflow] would [not be stream]ing, [then from the well pure]
13. [νο oδο φαρo αβο ασο σαδο αβο μαλιζo βοοηι]ο ωλδα ατι φραρ[αονο]  
[and abundant water shall be for the sanctuary] there. But the right[eous]
14. [βoο Oοημο ωζανδο σιδι καρανο αβο] 'oβoδραγγα πιδο ανο χ[ανο ταδ-]  
[King Ooēmo learned that the pure water] is scanty in the old sp[ring. Therefore,]
15. [ηιο Λια]'γο' [μα]'λο' α[βαρμαγ]γο λαδο ταδι αγδο αβαρ[μανδο αβο σαδο]  
he appointed [Liia]go to su[perintend]ent [he]re. He received the supervisory [authority over the well]
16. [oδο χανο]'o'τηο ι βρηoαρο βοε σι ειρο oαρηλι ωo'αρo'[oνδηο ταδι λ-]  
[and the spring so] that it should be his decision that the domestics of the fortress [should] cover the drinking water.
17. [αδο ασιδ]ι ιθα σι ειo μανο Κοβειρηo Λιαγο αλο [πιδοριχηοι ατι βo-]  
[Then it was also ordered] so that Liia go should continually [take care] for the Kuberean house. [Then King]
18. [ο Oοημ]ο λαοδηο ι αλογδα λαδο σιδι με ασο υαζιδο [μα αλο βοοηο]  
[Ooēm]o gave the verbal instruction that 'From my possessions water-conduit [never should be made!] Because otherwise
19. [ωρα]ονο μο ι αβγο ταδι μα αλο ειμο ανο αβο ι ωραo'ν'o [ατι βαγανοβι-]  
this never will be a water-flow!' [Then to priest]

20. [δο Τ]οχμοδανι λαδο οτι εμο χοαδηο νε κιδι αβα'ε[μαγγο οδο πιδορ]  
[T]oximodani was appointed. Thus it is our king who exercises the super[vision and] should [take care] of us.
21. [ιχσ]ηο ταδι ι μανο νινδιεατο ασιδι ιθα αγδινδι φρη'σ[ε ατανο λα]ν-]  
Then the house was assigned and at that they obtained the duties [so that they pres[ent]ed
22. [ο λα]δο καλδι αβο μο φιγαγγο Ιαο Οο[ημ]ο οατηιο [κιδι αβαρμανδο]  
[a gift] when King Ooēmo turns to the master [of the merchants?]
23. [ιθα] αγδο ατανο νοπαχτε αβο ναμω σι α'β[ο] φροζα[μο οδο φροβογιρδο]  
[who] received [the privilege so] that the duties of them are pledged for the cult which [should be] up to the end of time and eternity.
24. [βοε] οτ[ι βο]οηιο Οηβο οορο οισποοανανο κιδ[ι] μο χ[οαδηο νε]  
Then be the chosen of Oēso, who is [our] k[ing], victorious over all!

In spite of its fragmentary state, the Bactrian inscription D2 of Dilberjin gives us an interesting insight into the religious policy and the organizational work of Vima Kadphises. The propagation of the Śiva cult at Dilberjin and elsewhere presupposes the conquest of the north-western part of the Indian subcontinent by Vima, and this might have happened soon after his accession to the throne. Similarly, the crossing of Mount Qarabayu rising to a height of 4,500 m and the victory over the Sāinis as well as the preparation of the inscriptions at Dasht-i Nawur could only take place after the campaign he had led into the Indian subcontinent. The crossing of the high mountains is commemorated on his gold coins with Śiva and Nandi on their reverse, that is, the event was preceded by the spread and the propagation of the Śiva cult in Bactria. Thus, the building activity of Vima Kadphises at Dilberjin and the preparation of inscriptions D1 and D2 can be dated to the period between A.D. 110 and 120.

It seems that the religious policy of Vima underwent some modification towards the end of his reign. According to the testimony of the so-called unfinished inscription from Surkh Kotal (SK 2) he also extended his building activity to that region but apparently his intention was to build a sanctuary for a Bactrian or Kushan deity there. The text of the unfinished inscription from Surkh Kotal can be read in the following way:

χ'ονο σκθ διου 'θ Ιασ'ηανο Ιαο 'Οοημο Τακ'πισο 'β'αγο 'κ'ο'ονο λρου  
ν[ογονδο μαλο]

Era-year 299, on the 9th [day] of [month] Dios. King of Kings Ooēmo Takpiso, the Majesty, the Kuṣāṇa, had the canal d[ug] here].

Very likely, Vima Kadphises died after the completion of the canal and before the finishing of the inscription. Thus, he assured the water supply for the building operations which were probably continued by his successor Kanishka with-

out interruption. Therefore, the inscription witnessing the building activity of Vima Kadphises at Surkh Kotal was never finished.

None of the Bactrian inscriptions set up during the reign of Kanishka (Years 1–23 of the Kanishka era = A.D. 134–56) was preserved completely. At Surkh Kotal, the monumental wall inscription (SK 1) must have been prepared at the time of the first Great Kushan king. Unfortunately, however, only one fifth of the whole inscription (124 letters altogether) was preserved.

But the fragments permit us to form an idea about the contents of this important Bactrian record, which might originally have been composed of some 700 letters.

At the beginning of the inscription, the names and titles of the Kushan king were probably mentioned:

]βαγ[ο βαονανο β]αο οβ[οσαρο Κανηβκο ...]

the lord, Ki[ng of Kings], the mi[ghty Kaneško ...] (Fragment 1 + b)

The context is not clear; perhaps the passage can be restored in the following way: ‘The lord, Ki[ng of Kings], the mi[ghty Kaneško, the Kuṣāṇa, had this stronghold built]’. Then, very likely, a date followed (Fragment k + t + v):

[πιδο ι ι]ωγο [χβον]ο Τ[.....] ειλο α[γαδο ...]

[in the] first [era ye]ar T [an officer of the king] c[ame] here.

Apparently, the next section of the inscription described the building of the stronghold (Fragment m + c + g + a):

στη[ιο ειδο μαλιζο οδο βαγολαγγο πιδ]ο σαβ[αρο] σαρλ[ο] ανδι[βτο]

Then [this stronghold and the sanctuary] were built by him in four years.

It seems that further building operations were mentioned in the following passage (Fragment p + w + aa + u + s + y + q + n + j + x + f + r):

[οδο κ]εδο ι μ[αλιζ]ο φρ[ογιρδο ταδηιο ευο μο μα]βτο [οδο] παγ[δο ι ω]λε σ[αγωγι κ]ιρδο οτηιο πιδο ασαγγε λρουο ναρο]υγο ο[ιλιρδο ιθα ατηιο καρ]ανο αβο [πιδο λρουο]ο αβο [βαγανο νοβ]α]λμ[ο φροοα]στο [ατηιο βαγολαγγο π]ορο- [γατο]

[And] when the st[rongho]ld was com[pleted], then this façade [and] the stairs l[eading th]ere [were built by him. Moreover, the canal was wh]olly bu[ilt]ressed with stones so that p[ure] water was [pro- vided] [by him in the can]al for the ab[ode of the gods. Thus he] to[ok care of the sanctuary].

The last passage of the inscription obviously summarized the activity of the royal officer or of his attendants and gave information about the preparation of the record. (The end of the inscription was preserved *in situ*):

[στο ειο μο μαλιζο οδο λρουο So-and-So κερδο πιδο ι χουαδηο ψρομανο στο So-and-So] νοβιχτο μο μαητο ουβε μο παγδο ι ωλε σαγωγι

[Moreover, this stronghold and the canal were built by So-and-So by the order of the king]. Then So-and-So inscribed the façade and the stairs leading there.

Thus, on the basis of the preserved fragments about three-fifths of the inscription (altogether about 400 letters) can be restored, while Fragments d, e, h, i, o, z = 23 letters were not used for the restoration. The missing passages, consisting of some 270 letters, might have mentioned the preparatory work and earlier building operations of Vima Kadphises and perhaps the intended purpose of the stronghold and the consecration of the sanctuary.

The third inscription of Surkh Kotal (SK 4) was prepared in three versions (SK 4A, SK 4B and SK 4M; see Fig. 1) shortly after Year 31 of the Kanishka era, probably under the joint rule of the Kushan kings Vāsishka, Kanishka II and Huvishka, as Huvishka is already mentioned in Year 28 of the Kanishka era while the two former kings are jointly attested in the inscription from Kamra dated from Year 30 of the same era.

The three versions of the inscription differ from one another in both language and content. Version A describes the earlier fate of the stronghold and the arrival of Nokonzoko, the *karalrango*, who had a well dug to provide drinking water for the stronghold. Besides this officer, nobody else is mentioned; even the scribe and the mason, preparing the record, are only indicated by their personal devices (Device 1 and Device 2). The language of the inscription is correct Bactrian.

Version B was prepared by another scribe and mason who are both indicated by Device 3 and Device 4 and also mentioned by name – Liiago and Adego – who can be regarded as Kushans or Sakas on the basis of their names. This version already mentions the name of the architect who dug the well. Apart from this, the text of Version B coincides with that of Version A. From a linguistic viewpoint, however, there is an important difference. In Version B, some verbal forms, the particles, the relative pronouns and some nouns terminate in *-i* instead of *-o*. This striking phenomenon cannot be explained by orthographic variation or instability because it only occurs in one and the same Version B, while Version A and Version M offer no instances of it. In view of the fact that the scribe and mason of Version B were probably of Kushan or Saka origin and in their language the outcome of Old Iranian *-ah* was *-i* instead of *-o* in Bactrian, this linguistic feature of SK 4B can probably be regarded as the interference of the Kushan or Saka language. If, therefore, the term Kushano-Bactrian or Sako-Bactrian had a real linguistic background, it could best be applied to the language of the inscription SK 4B.

The reason for the preparation of Version B can only have been the lack of any reference in Version A to the architect and to the order of the king by which he had the well dug. However, it seems that further essential building



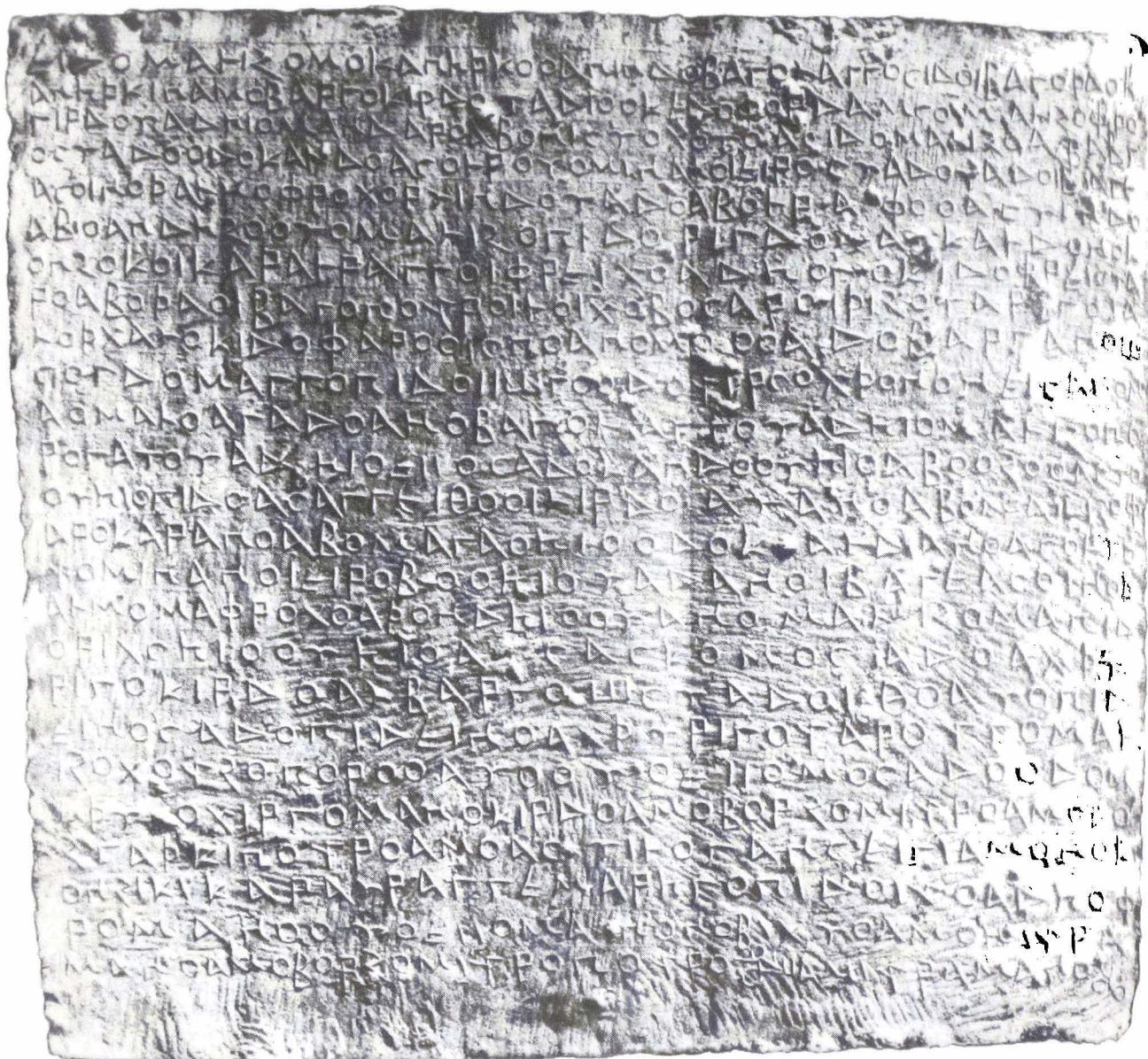


FIG. 1. Bactrian inscription SKM from Surkh Kotal.

operations were executed later on. Another architect, Xirgomano by name, had the lower façade of the sanctuary built. To commemorate this event, the scribe of Version A, indicated by Device 2, and a third mason represented by Device 5, were again commissioned to prepare a new inscription – Version M. They copied the text of Version A but added two passages, one mentioning the building of the façade by Xirgomano, the other indicating the names of the scribe and mason.

The text of SK 4 (A, B, M) runs:

1. (M) ειδο μαλιζο μο Κανηλχο Οανινδο βαγολαγγο σιδο [B: σιδι] ι βαγο βασ [B: βασο] Κανηλχι [B: Κανηλχι] ναμοβαργο κινδο [B: κινδι].

This stronghold is the 'Kanesko' Oanindo sanctuary which the lord king made the namebearer of Kanesko.

2. ταδιοο κεδο [A: κιδο, B: κεδι] φορδαμσο μαλιζο φρογιρδο ταδηιο μανδαρο αβο νιστο [B: νιστι] χοτο ασιδο [B: ασιδι] μαλιζο [B: μαλιζα] αβαβγο σταδο. οδο καλδο ασο λρουο [B: λρου] μινανο ι ειρο σταδο, ταδο [B: ταδι] ι βαγε ασο ι νοβαλμο [B: ια νιβαλμο] φροχορτινδο [B: φροχορτινδι] ταδο αβο Λραφο οαστινδο [B: οαστινδι] αβο Ανδηζο οτο [B: οτι] μαλιζο πιδοριγδο [B: πιδοριγδι].

At that time when the stronghold was first completed, then its inner water to drink was missing, therefore the stronghold was without water. And when the water-flow disappeared from the canal, then the gods wished themselves away from the abode. Then they were led to Lrafo, [namely] to Andêzo. Afterwards the stronghold became abandoned.

3. τα καλδο [B: καλδι] Νοκονζοκο [B: Νοκονζικο] ι καραλραγγο ι φρειχ-οαδηαγο κιδο [B: πιδι] φρεισταρο αβο βαο ι [A: βαυο] βαγοπουρο [B: βαγο-ποορο] ιλο [B: αλι] ι χοβοσαρο ι βιζογαργο [B: βιζογαργε] ι αλοβχαλο [A: αλαχβαλο] κιδο [B: κιδι] φαρο οισποανο μο οαδο βαργανο ωσογδομαγγο πιδο ι ιωγο οδο υιρσο [A: ιωγο <ο>δο, B: ιωγο υιρσο] χρονο Νεισανο μαο [A: μανο] μαλο αγαδο αμο [B: αβο μο] βαγολαγγο ταδηιο μαλιζο πορογατο [B: ποργα[το]]. ταδηιο ευο [B: ειο] σαδο κανδο οτηιο [B: ατηιο] αβο οζοοαστο [A: αζοοαστο, B: ζοοαστι] οτηιο πιδο ασαγγε ιθο [B: ιθα] οιλιρδο ατανο αβο μαλιζο φαρο καρανο αβο μα γαοηιο οδο καλδανο ασο λρουο [B: λρου] μινανο ι ειρο βοοηιο ταδανο ι βαγε [A: β[αγ]ο] ασο ι νοβαλμο [B: ια νιβαλμο] μα φροχοαβονδηιο [B: φροχωβινδηιο] οτανο μαλιζο μα πιδοριχσηιο.

Then, when Nokonzoko, the *karalrango*, the king's favourite who is most devoted towards the king, the Son of God, the patron, the benefactor, the merciful as well, who wishes glory, all-winning strength from pure heart, came here to the sanctuary in the 31st Era-year, in the month *Nisān*, then he took care of the stronghold. Then he had a well dug, thus he provided water. Thereafter, he buttressed [the well] with stones so that the fine, pure water should not be missing for the stronghold. And when for them the water-flow would disappear from the canal, even then the gods should not wish themselves away from their abode, thus the stronghold should not become abandoned by them.

4. οτηιο ασασκο μο σαδο αχβτριγο κιδο αλβαργο ωσταδο ιθο [AB: ιθα] ατο [B: ατι] πιδεινο [B: πιδεινι] σαδο πιδεινο [B: πιδεινι] αχβτριγο υαρουγο [A: <υα>ρουγο] μαλιζο χουζο ποροοατο.

Moreover, he appointed an inspector over the well, he placed a helper there, so that a separate [inspector] took good care of the well and a separate inspector of the whole stronghold.

5. οτο ευο μο σαδο οδο μαλτο Χιργομανο κιδο αμο Βορζομιυρο αμο Κοζ-γαλκιπουρο αμο Αστιλογανσειγι αμο Νοκονζικι καραλραγγε μαρηγο πιδο ι χοαδηο φρομανο [A: -, B: οτι ειρ σαδο Βορζομιορο κιδι, Κοζγαλκιπ[ο]υρο, Υαστιλογανζειγο, Νοκονζικι καραλραγγι μαρηγι πιδο χοαδηο φρομανο].

Moreover, this well and the façade were made by Xirgomano and Borzomihro, the son of Kozgaško, the citizen of Astilogan, the attendant of Nokonzoko, the *karalrango*, by the order of the king. [B: Moreover, this well was made by Borzomioro, son of Kozgaško, citizen of Hastilogan, attendant of Nokonziko, the *karalrango*, by the order of the king.]

6. οτο Ευομανο νοβιχτο αμο Μιυραμανο αμο Βορζομιυροπουρο, Device 5, αμ-ιυραμανο, Device 2 [A: Device 1, αμοιραμανο, Device 2, B: λιαγο, Device 3, Αδηγο Device 4].



Moreover, Eiiomano inscribed [this] together with Mihramano, the son of Borzomihro [Device 5] jointly [Device 2]. (A: Device 1 jointly, Device 2, B: Liiago, Device 3, Adego, Device 4).

In the historical context of inscription SK 4 of Surkh Kotal, the question may be raised: Which of the Kushan kings is mentioned by the modest titles βαγο βαο in this record? According to the testimony of the Kharoṣṭhī inscription from Kamra, in Year 30 of the Kanishka era, it was Vāsishka who bore among others the titles *mahārāja rājatirāja* while his son Kanishka was probably styled only *mahārāja*. Similarly, Huvishka only bore the title *mahārāja* in Brāhmī inscriptions between Years 23 and 40 of the same era. Corresponding with the Brāhmī inscriptions, on the inscription of Ayrtaṃ, written in Bactrian and dated Year 30 of the Kanishka era (see below), he is styled βαο and βαγο βαο which apparently correspond to the title *mahārāja* on the one hand, and coincide with the title βαγο βαο used in inscription SK 4 of Surkh Kotal on the other. Thus in Year 31 of the Kanishka era (A.D. 164) three Kushan kings, namely Vāsishka I with the Indian titles *mahārāja rājatirāja* (~ Bactrian βαγο βαοναο βαο), Kanishka II bearing the Indian title *mahārāja* (~ Bactrian βαγο βαο), and Huvishka I with the same Indian title *mahārāja* and with the Bactrian title βαγο βαο, respectively, were ruling. Obviously, the king styled βαγο βαο in inscription SK 4 of Surkh Kotal could only be either Kanishka II or Huvishka (I). In view of the fact that according to the text of the inscription ‘the lord king made [the sanctuary] name-bearer of Kaneṣko’, it is perhaps more likely that ‘the lord king’ was Kanishka II, who was able to revive the cult of Oanindo/Victory in Surkh Kotal with good reason after his victory over the Parthians about A.D. 162, attested by the *Śrīdharmapiṭakanidānasūtra*.

An important inscription in the Bactrian language was discovered in 1979 at Ayrtaṃ, 18 km east of Termez on the northern bank of the Amu Darya. The inscription was engraved on the front side of a square base of a monumental relief representing the deities Farro and Ardoxšo. Its text runs as follows:

1. [βα]ο ορη[χο] ι χ[ρο]νο λ κα[λδ]ι ι α[ρδο]χο φαρε[ο] πιδογαρα] μαλ[ι ι] βα[γ]ο  
βαο βαγδο οδο ωσταδ[ο]  
King [is] Ooeško, the Era-year [is] 30 when the lord king presented and had the Ardoxšo-Farro image set up here.
2. [τα κ]αλ[δι] φρογι[ρδ]ο μαλιζα σταδο βοδιλα [. . . . .] ι γανζαβαραβο  
βαγολαγγο ζιδο ατι  
At that time when the stronghold was completed then Šodila [. . . . .] the treasurer was sent to the sanctuary. Thereupon
3. [ειδο] πιδ[ο]γαρα βοδιλα κιρδο <ο>τι ανι <ι>α αβο μαλιζα ωσταδο ατι κ[αλ]δι ι  
[α]βο φρολβαρδο  
Šodila had this image prepared, then he [is] who had [it] set up in the stronghold. Afterwards when the water moved farther away,

4. [τ]αδι [ι ιαζαδε] οασιτινδο α[σ]ο [ι] μ[α]λ[ιζ]α αβαβο ατι <ι>δι ιοδιλα σαδι  
νιγανδο ατι  
then the divinities were led away from the waterless stronghold. Just therefore, Šodila had a well  
dug, then
5. ιοδιλα αβο μαλιζα αβογανδο ριζδι οτι οβει ι ιαζαδε μαλι αβο βα[γ]ολαγ[γ]ο  
αβ[α-]  
Šodila had a water-conduit dug in the stronghold. Thereupon both divinities returned back here
6. [σ]ο γιοατινδο οτι εμο μιροζαδα νιβιχτο πιδο ια ιοδιλα φοομανα  
to the sanctuary. This was written by Miirozada by the order of Šodila.

The Bactrian inscription of Ayrtaṃ allows us an interesting insight into the inner organization and religious policy of the Kushan kingdom. The Kushan gods represented on the coins were for a long time shadowy figures. The situation changed when the sanctuary of Oanindo was discovered at Surkh Kotal, and the sanctuary of Oaxšo was found at Takht-i Sangin. Now the cult of Farro and Ardoxšo is firmly attested by the relief and inscription from Ayrtaṃ.

The Bactrian script and language were used for a long time after the Kushan age but only small fragments of Bactrian literary works have been discovered so far. The latest known examples of Bactrian script date from the end of the ninth century A.D. and were found in the Tochi valley in Pakistan.

## Sanskrit and Prakrit

The territory of the Kushan Empire included important parts of modern Pakistan and India with a large population speaking Indian languages. Long before the Kushan age two scripts – Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhī – and several literary languages – Sanskrit and different Prakrits – came into being and were highly developed in the Indian subcontinent. Of the two scripts, Kharoṣṭhī was used in the north-west, its eastern limit running across the Panjab with only exceptional examples further east, for example, in Mathura. Variants of Brāhmī spread in the other parts of the subcontinent. The language, written in the Kharoṣṭhī script, was the Gāndhārī Prakrit spoken in Gandhāra and adjacent regions; Brāhmī was used for Sanskrit and, except for Gāndhārī, for the other Prakrit languages.

The use of Kharoṣṭhī had already reached Bactria during the time of the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom. The Graeco-Bactrian kings used Kharoṣṭhī and Gāndhārī Prakrit as well as Greek for their coin inscriptions. This can be explained partly by the fact that the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom included Gandhāra, a territory where Gāndhārī Prakrit and Kharoṣṭhī script were used, partly by their spread towards Central Asia across Bactria. Evidence of such a process can be seen in the coins with the Gāndhārī legend in Kharoṣṭhī: *Kaviṣīye Nag-*



*aradevata* (\**Kāpiśikā Nagaradevatā*, city-goddess of Kāpiśa). There is also a Kharoṣṭhī inscription on the smoothing knob of a potter from the Graeco-Bactrian level of Begram (Kāpiśa): *pu-ñā-mi-tra-sa* '[property] of Punyamitra'. The name *Punyamitra* has a clear, Buddhist character and so this inscription attests not only the spread of the Kharoṣṭhī script and Gāndhārī Prakrit, but also the appearance of Indian Buddhists in Graeco-Bactria.

Another early trace of Kharoṣṭhī can be seen at Ay Khanum, where on a potsherd a Kharoṣṭhī record came to light: [*sa x+*]I *daṃ* III *dha* III '[stater x+]I *draṃma* III *dhana* III'. It is likely that Kharoṣṭhī script and Gāndhārī Prakrit were brought by Indian merchants and artisans to Transoxanian Bactria in the Graeco-Bactrian period if the Kushan script (the 'unknown script', see above) can really be derived from the Kharoṣṭhī alphabet, and if the dating of the inscription from Issik (see above) to the end of the third century B.C. proves to be correct. In any case, the use of Kharoṣṭhī and Gāndhārī became more and more extensive in the Saka and Indo-Parthian periods. The Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions on the gold ingots of the hoard from Dalverzin-tepe in northern Bactria bear witness to this development.

The reasons for the quick spread of Kharoṣṭhī and Gāndhārī Prakrit in Bactria and Central Asia are easy to see. The first was that literacy was widely spread among both Buddhist monks and Brahmins, and it was much easier to find Indian scribes acquainted with Kharoṣṭhī than experts in other scripts. So Saka and Indo-Parthian and later Kushan administration became based, to a certain extent, on Indian scribes. Then, from the beginning of the silk trade about 100 B.C., Indian merchants travelled to China across Central Asia and contributed to the spread of Kharoṣṭhī in the Saka and Indo-Parthian kingdoms and later in the Kushan Empire. As a trace of their travels in the western Pamirs, the Kharoṣṭhī inscription of Dayr-Asan, dated to the beginning of the first century B.C., may be mentioned. Last but not least, Buddhism appeared in Central Asia, and Buddhist monks also followed the Silk Route in the tracks of the merchants, did active missionary work, found patrons and established monasteries. The growth of the silk trade, the spread of Kharoṣṭhī script and Gāndhārī Prakrit and the propagation of Buddhism reached a peak under the Kushans.

As a result of this development, Kharoṣṭhī script and Gāndhārī Prakrit conquered new territories in northern Bactria in the region of Termez, Chilas and Gilgit as well as in Chinese Turkestan. According to Hsüan-tsang, there were ten Buddhist monasteries in the neighbourhood of Termez in the first half of the seventh century A.D. Some of them must have been founded in the Kushan age, and among them the cave monastery of Kara-tepe (excavated during the last twenty years) was the most important. The numerous Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions found there mostly represent records of donors written on earthenware vessels. On the basis of the letter forms, they can be dated to the Kushan period.

The Kharoṣṭhī rock inscriptions from Chilas and Gilgit, discovered as the

result of explorations since 1979, can similarly be dated to the Kushan period. They are of three types: (a) records of pious donations (the image of a stupa or the Buddha, etc. carved on the 'Sacred Rock of Hunza'); (b) records of personal names followed by the good-wish formula *subratu* (with *bra* instead of *bhra* like *dra* instead of *dhra* in the Kharoṣṭhī inscription of Kamra; thus < \**su-bhratu* < \**su-bhartu* < Old Indian *su-bharatu* or *su-bharatān* 'So-and-So may be well!'); and (c) personal names. These are of great importance from both the historical and cultural points of view. They bear witness to Saka and Kushan suzerainty in Gilgit, and provide clear evidence of both the penetration of Buddhism and the spread of Kharoṣṭhī script and Gāndhārī Prakrit into the northernmost Indus valley.

The third region, that is Chinese Turkestan, was penetrated by Kharoṣṭhī and Gāndhārī Prakrit in the Late Kushan period. The numerous Kharoṣṭhī administrative documents (about 800), written on wood, leather and paper, were found mainly at Niya and Lou-lan. Earlier researchers thought that they were introduced into the administration of the Kingdom of Shan-shan as a result of Kushan rule there. Later, however, it became clear that the Tarim basin had never been subject to the Kushans and the emergence of Kharoṣṭhī script there cannot be explained by that theory. Kushan chronology also makes any such connection impossible because the western part of the Kushan Empire was annexed by the Sasanians in A.D. 234, while Kharoṣṭhī script was introduced into the administration of the Kingdom of Shan-shan about A.D. 245. This can probably be explained by the assumption that when the Sasanians conquered Balkh, many Indian staff who had worked in the Kushan administration escaped by the Silk Route to the Kingdom of Shan-shan, entered the service of King Tajaka who in about A.D. 245 was reigning there, and played an important role in creating its state organization, introducing Gāndhārī chancellery practice.

Compared with the Kharoṣṭhī script of Gandhāra, the alphabet of the Kharoṣṭhī documents from Niya and Lou-lan has some peculiar features, of which the most striking is the indication of long vowels by a short stroke written below the line at Niya. The same phenomenon can only be observed in the Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions of Kara-tepe and Fayaz-tepe near Termez. However, the origin of this sign is explained, as its earlier emergence in northern Bactria proves that it was from there that Kharoṣṭhī script spread to Shan-shan by the Silk Route, that is, it did not reach Niya directly from Gandhāra via Gilgit and the Karakorum.

The indication of the length of vowels is fully developed in the Brāhmī script which was used to write Sanskrit and Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit. It therefore seems obvious that the indication of vowel length in Kharoṣṭhī developed under the influence of the Brāhmī script in a religious or administrative centre, where the two scripts were used side by side. The spread of Brāhmī towards the north-west had already begun in the Saka period. Indian merchants using Brāhmī script for Gāndhārī Prakrit had already reached China about the middle

of the first century B.C., as their presence is attested by the Brāhmī inscription on a silk strip found on the Chinese limes at Tun-huang.

The role played by Buddhist monks in the spread of Brāhmī was even greater. The decisive turning-point was the synod of the Sarvāstivāda school held in Kashmir during the reign of Kanishka, which, according to the tradition, compiled the *Jñānaprasthānam*, and entrusted Aśvaghoṣa, the famous poet from Sāketa, with providing for the correct language form of the commentary written by Kātyāyana. In view of the fact that Aśvaghoṣa wrote his works in standard Sanskrit, his commission obviously meant the preference of Sanskrit to Prakrit, which was also used earlier by the Sarvāstivādins. Earlier, both the Mahāsāṅghika and the Sarvāstivāda schools used Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī equally in the territories where the two scripts spread. Thus, in Mathura, both the Mahāsāṅghikas and the Sarvāstivādins used Brāhmī script for their inscriptions, while both schools adopted Kharoṣṭhī for their epigraphic monuments in Gandhāra.

After the synod of Kashmir, however, the Sarvāstivādins preferred Sanskrit or Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit and Brāhmī script, and when they penetrated Bactria on the tracks of the Mahāsāṅghikas, Brāhmī also appeared in the Buddhist monasteries. This development can be seen clearly at Kara-tepe, where inscriptions written in both Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī occur on earthenware vessels. The Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions belonged to the Mahāsāṅghika school as is proved by the texts themselves. Therefore, the inscriptions written in Brāhmī probably represent the Sarvāstivādins. This connection between script and sect after the synod of Kashmir is further proved by the fact that the first wave of Buddhism brought the Mahāsāṅghika school together with Kharoṣṭhī and Gāndhārī to Khotan, while the second transferred the Sarvāstivādins there together with Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit and Brāhmī script.

There can be no doubt that the indication of vowel length in Kharoṣṭhī script came into being under the influence of Brāhmī script in the Buddhist monasteries of northern Bactria, especially in the region of Termez, where Mahāsāṅghikas and Sarvāstivādins lived side by side, and Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī were used side by side in the Kushan period. Thus, at Kara-tepe, the spellings *kāśi* 'cup' and *[ma]hāsāṅghikānam* 'of the Mahāsāṅghikas' occur while in Fayaz-tepe the spelling *sarvasatvāna* 'of all beings' is attested.

Gāndhārī Prakrit, the language spoken in Gandhāra and used for administrative and economic purposes by the Kushans, was also one of the literary languages of Buddhism, and before the synod of Kashmir it had produced a relatively rich Buddhist literature which was later thrust into the background by Buddhist works written in Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit. Of Buddhist works in Gāndhārī Prakrit, only the Kharoṣṭhī *Dhammapada* has been preserved, and this was discovered in Khotan, far to the east of ancient Bactria. The fate of the *Dhammapada* shows what happened to Buddhist Gāndhārī Prakrit literature. It was slowly driven out by the Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit works written in

Brāhmī, and only survived to a limited extent in the city-states of the Tarim basin, while even there the local languages, Khotanese, Agnean and Kuchean, used Brāhmī instead of Kharoṣṭhī. Kharoṣṭhī was only retained for administrative purposes in Kucha, where the latest documents are dated between A.D. 618 and 647.

According to Buddhist tradition preserved in the Pālī canon, monks of Brahmanic origin proposed to the Buddha that his words should be put into Sanskrit; and even though the Buddha ordained that everyone should use his own language in reciting the sacred texts, the Sanskritization of Buddhist texts began at an early date. The language, which came into being gradually by the increasing Sanskritization of Buddhist texts fixed in a Middle Indian dialect (Prakrit), became Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit.

Some Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit works already existed as early as the first century B.C., and the 'nucleus' of the *Mahāvastu*, written with the aim of describing the life of the Buddha, may go back to the first century B.C., even though it was successively expanded by additions, the latest of which can be dated to the fourth century A.D. While the growth of Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit literature covers half a millennium, its golden age was the period of the Great Kushans. The most important Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit works were compiled or given their definitive form during this period. These include the *Mahāvastu*, the *Lalitavistara* (a Vinaya text of the Lokottaravādins, a school of the Mahāsāṅghikas, originally a work of the Sarvāstivāda school giving a biography of the Buddha), the *Avadānas* (tales of great acts or of the fruits of man's actions, the oldest of which may be the *Avadānaśataka*), the *Divyāvadāna* (a collection of Buddhist legends), and the *Saddharma-Puṇḍarīka* (propagating the ideal and the worship of the Bodhisattva and glorifying the Buddha as a being of inconceivable might).

The perfection of Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit literature could hardly have taken place without the personality and activity of the great Indian poet Aśvaghoṣa. According to Buddhist tradition he lived at the court of the Kushan king Candana Kanishka, who is to be regarded as Kanishka II, ruling from Years 30 to 42 of the Kanishka era (i.e. A.D. 164–76).

He wrote the two *kāvya* epics, the *Saundarananda* (the legend of the conversion of Nanda, the half-brother of the Buddha) and the *Buddhacarita* (the story of the life of the Buddha himself). Unfortunately, the greater part of Aśvaghoṣa's poetic work has been lost or is only preserved in fragments, but it is clear from his two epics that he was one of the most important poets of Sanskrit literature, who exercised an influence even on Kālidāsa. The style of Aśvaghoṣa is relatively simple and obviously represents the so-called Vaidarbha style, but it is still impressive, sensuous and daintily elaborated. To illustrate this we may quote two verses from the *Buddhacarita* depicting a sleeping beauty of the harem:



*vibabhau karalagnaveṇur anyā: stanavisrastasitāmśukā śayānā  
rjuṣaṭpadapaṅktijuṣṭapadmā: jalaphenaprahasattaṭā nadīva.*

One was gleaning, holding a flute in her hand: she was lying with a white garment slipping from her bosom  
like the river in whose lotuses whole swarms of bees delight: whose banks laugh with the foam of her waters.

The importance and the popularity of Aśvaghoṣa's poetic works are best shown by their influence on Kālidāsa and their spread beyond the borders of the Kushan Empire to the Tarim basin, and to China in Chinese translations. Gāndhārī Prakrit literature could not set anything of equal literary value against them, and it was not therefore by chance that the fragments of the *Śāriputra-prakarāṇa*, a drama of Aśvaghoṣa, came to light in Turfan.

## Sogdian

The territory of Sogdiana (the Zerafshan valley) did not belong to the Kushan Empire, but Sogdian merchants engaged in the silk trade often visited both Bactria and Gandhāra. In some periods they used the route across the Karakorum range to Gilgit, and left many hundreds of Sogdian inscriptions on the rocks at Thor and Shatial Bridge. These Sogdian records were written in the same alphabet as the Sogdian 'Ancient Letters' found on the Chinese limes at Tun-huang from the end of the second century A.D., so the bulk of the Sogdian inscriptions at Thor and Shatial Bridge should belong to the Kushan, or at most to the Late Kushan, period. They mostly consist of the proper name of an individual together with that of his father with some indication of his origin and the circumstances of his journey. Inscriptions with a longer text scarcely occur. It is interesting to note that some of the Sogdian names mentioned in the 'Ancient Letters' as *Nanēβandak*, *Nanēθβār*, *Δruvāspβandak*, *Taxsīcβandak* also occur in the inscriptions of Thor and Shatial. As most of the Sogdian names at Thor and Shatial have no parallel in the 'Ancient Letters', the occurrence of the quoted names may have particular importance. Perhaps *Taxsīcβandak*, father of *Nanēβandak*, may be identical with *Taxsīcβandak*, son of *Nanēβandak*, mentioned in Letter 2; and *Δruvāspβandak*, father of *Farnē*, may be the same as *Δruvāspβandak*, who is also mentioned in Letter 2. In this case the rock inscriptions of Thor and Shatial would be dated to the end of the Kushan and the beginning of the Late Kushan period in the third century A.D.

The same date can be proposed for the Parthian and Middle Persian inscriptions carved on the rock among the Sogdian records. Both the Parthian inscription (*wryhrn šhypwḥrn* < Varihrān Šāhipuhrān) and the Middle Persian one (*špyh* \**Šapīh* or \**Šipīh*) are written in the Pahlavīk and Pārsīk alphabets of Early Sasanian date, that is, they can also be dated to about A.D. 230–60. The

chronological position of these inscriptions enables us to elucidate the historical background of their emergence in Thor and Shatial. Obviously the conquest of the western part of the Kushan kingdom by the Sasanians interfered with traffic and trade between Sogdiana and Kušānšahr (now belonging to Iran), and between Sasanian Kušānšahr and the north-western part of the Indian subcontinent. To keep away from Sasanian Kušānšahr, Sogdian merchants took the route through Gilgit and across the Karakorum range. Later, when political relations between Iran, Sogdiana and the Indian Kushan kingdom were consolidated, the difficult route across the Karakorum was abandoned.

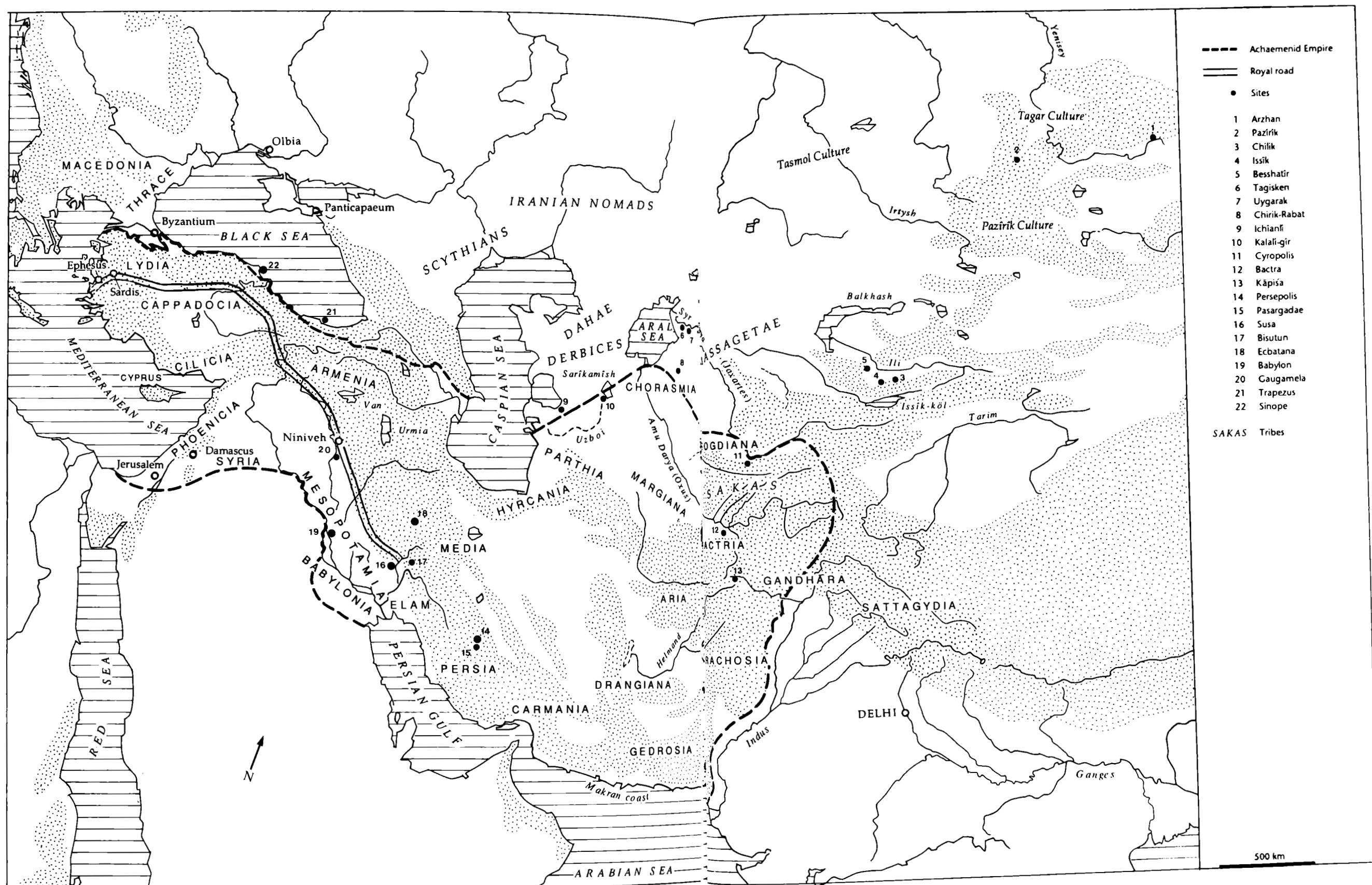
The indications of origin in the Sogdian inscriptions deserve special attention because they considerably enlarge our understanding of trade relations in Central Asia. We may quote the following inscriptions:

- 4a. *pnšt pysk δβrtβγ'n BRY n'βc* 'Pisak, son of 0βartβayān, citizen of Naβ, perished'. Naβ can be identical with Nawa of the Arab geographers, a village 2 – 3 *farsakhs* from Samarkand.
- 4b. *wnnysrδ ZK nrck BRY wrδnc* 'Vananisarδ, son of Narcak, citizen of Warδan'. Warδan may be identified with Wardāna of the Arab geographers, an important village in the district of Bukhara.
45. *...p'c BRY šxyβ'γc* '[So-and-So], son of [...] p'c, citizen of Šāhβay'. The latter name may be compared to Šāhbaḥš of Arab geography, a district in the area of Bukhara.
51. *βwxs'kk ZK wnxrk BRY p'yknδc* 'Bōxsāk, son of Vanxarak, citizen of Paykand'. The town Paykand lay 5 *farsakhs* from Bukhara.
- 57c. *n'wrβ' ZK rwδ'ync* 'Nāwraβa, citizen of Rōdēn'. The toponym Rōdēn 'Copper [Fort]' may be another name for Paykand, the 'Copper Fort'.
135. *xwt'wz'mk ZK kš'yknδc* 'Xwatāwzāmak, citizen of Kašekand'. The latter toponym may be the forerunner of Kāyškan or Kāškan of the Arab geographers (< Kašikanδ), a village in the neighbourhood of Bukhara.

Most of the indications of origin refer to the territory of Bukhara and Samarkand. Besides, there are some remarkable indications:

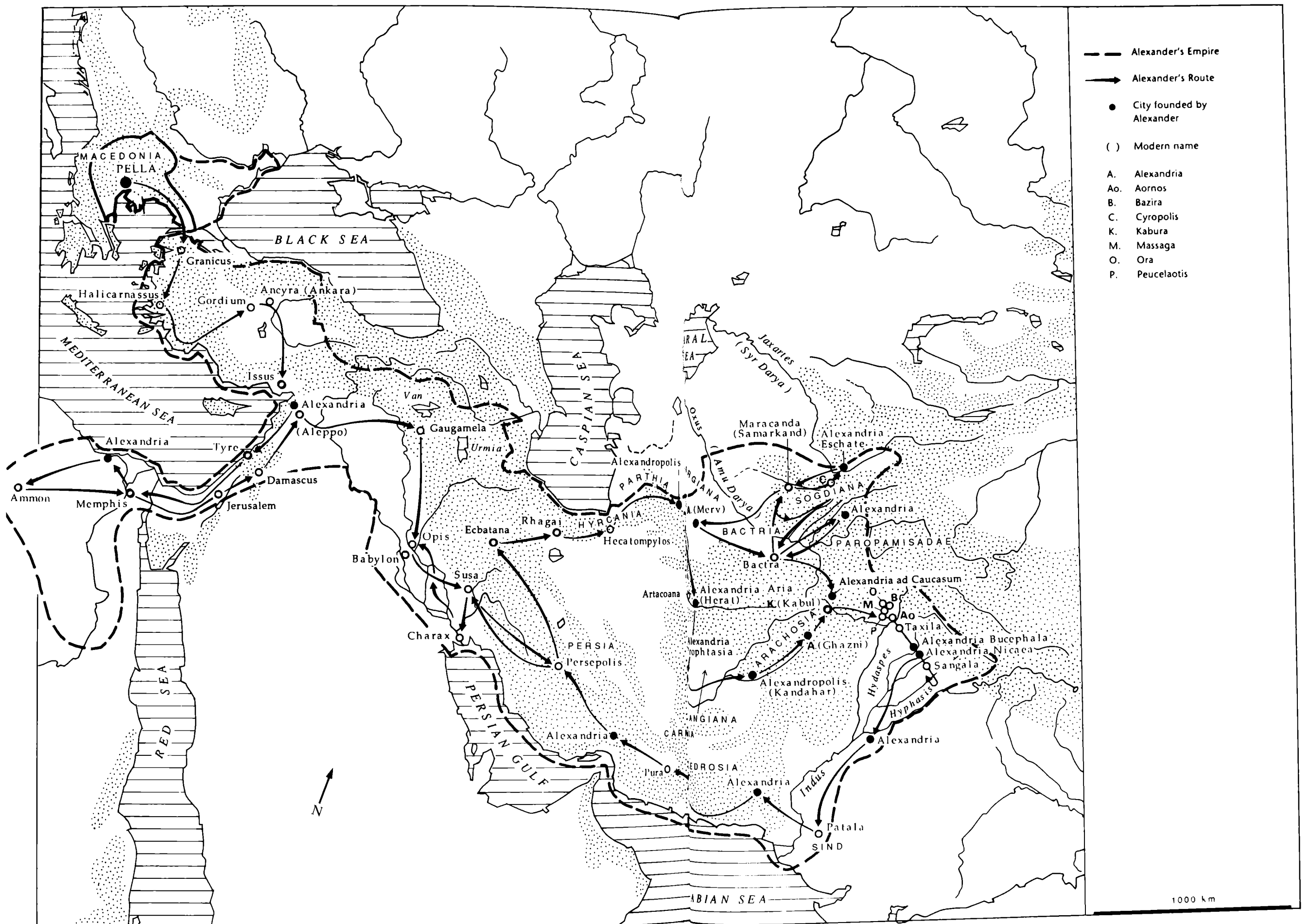
- 9c. *xnsc δwyt'kk cyn'nch* 'Xansacδuytāk, daughter of Xansac, citizen of Cinānc'. The fuller form of this toponym was Cinānckand; it was the Sogdian name for Turfan.
- 64b. This is the record of *wrβ'kk ZK 'kwc'k* 'Warβāk, the citizen of Kuča'. Warβāk seems to be a name of Kuchean origin (cf. Kuchean *wārw-*, to stimulate).
- 122b. This mentions *pysk ZK rxwtc* 'Pisak, citizen of Raxwat'. Raxwat is the Middle Iranian name for Arachosia.

Thus the settlements of the Sogdians were already spread throughout the whole of Central Asia. From Bukhara and Samarkand to Turfan and from Arachosia to Kucha, they played an important intermediary role in the mutual exchange of both material and intellectual culture between Iran, India and China in the Kushan age.

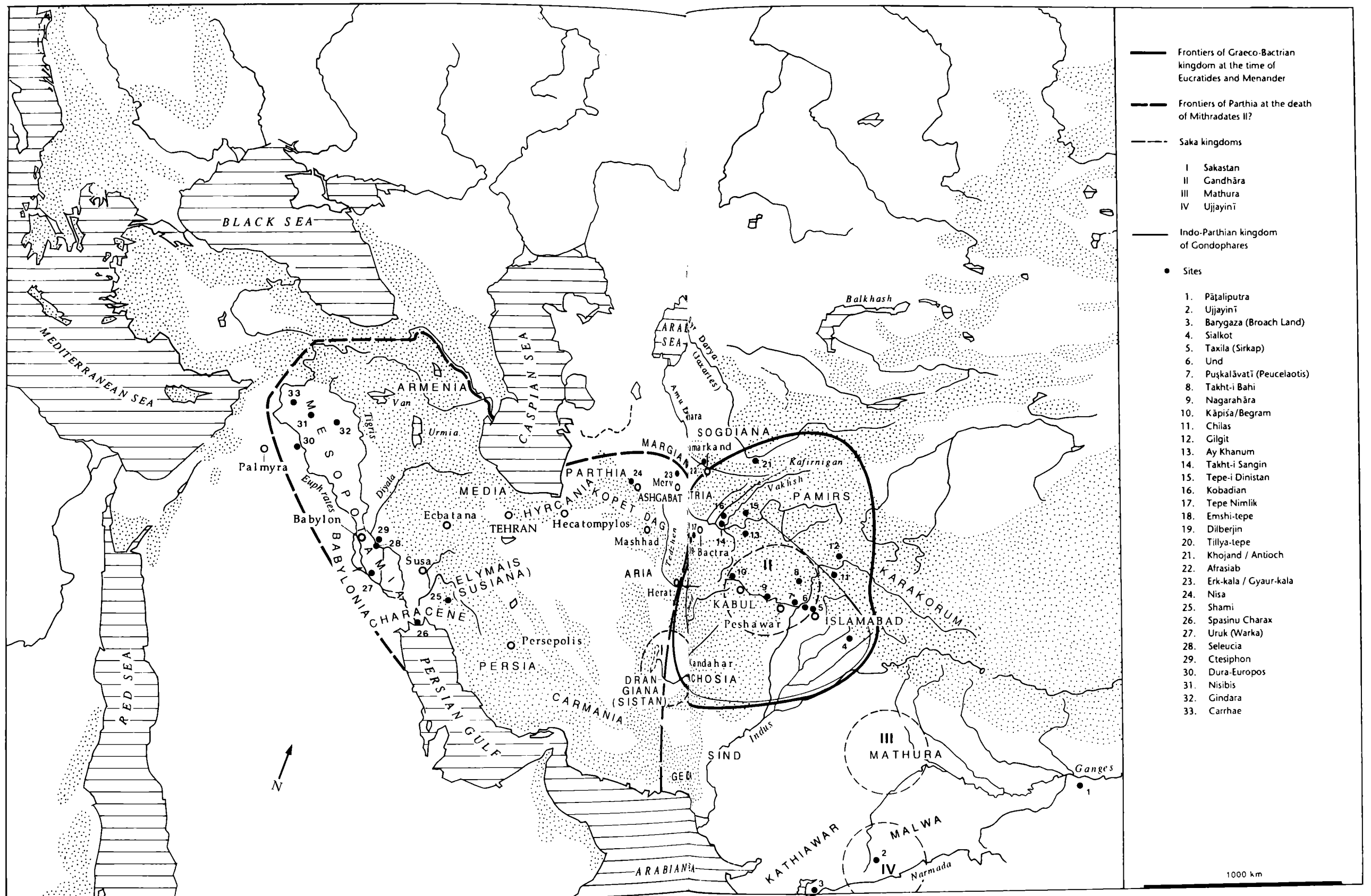


MAP 1. The Achaemenid Empire and the Iranian nomadic tribes of Central Asia.

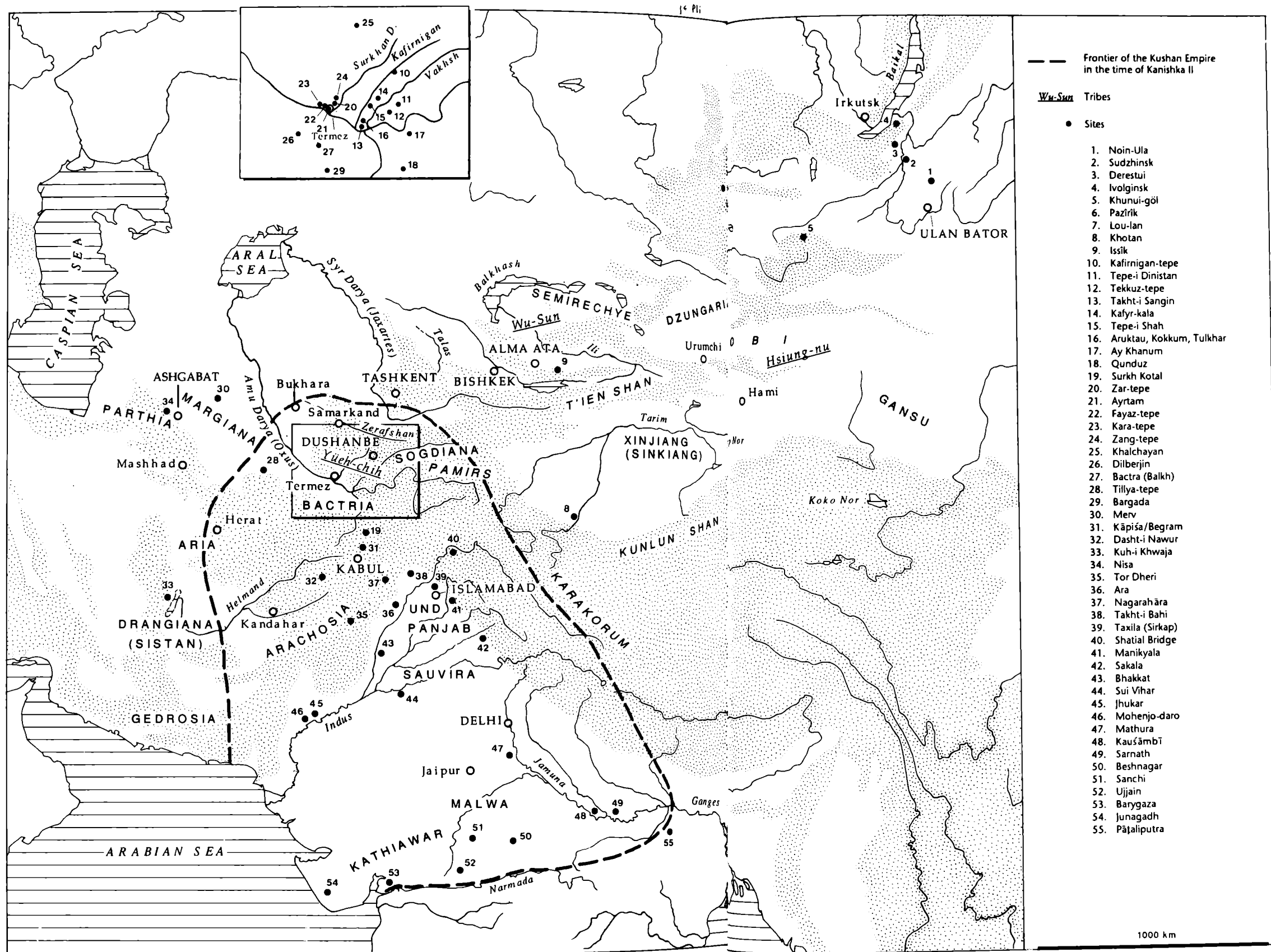




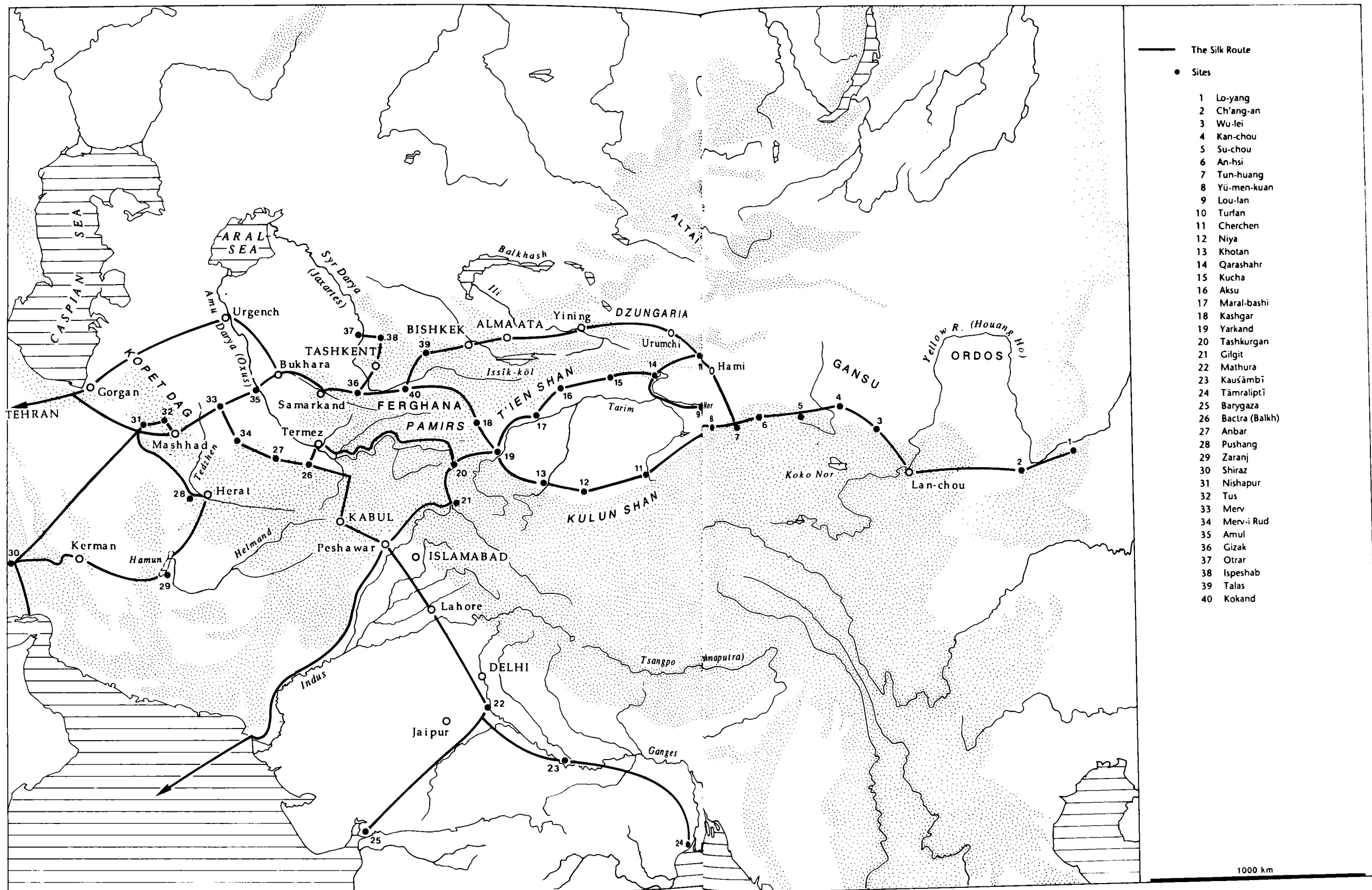
MAP 2. The campaigns of Alexander the Great in Central Asia.



MAP 3. Parthia, Graeco-Bactria, Indo-Parthia and the Saka kingdoms.

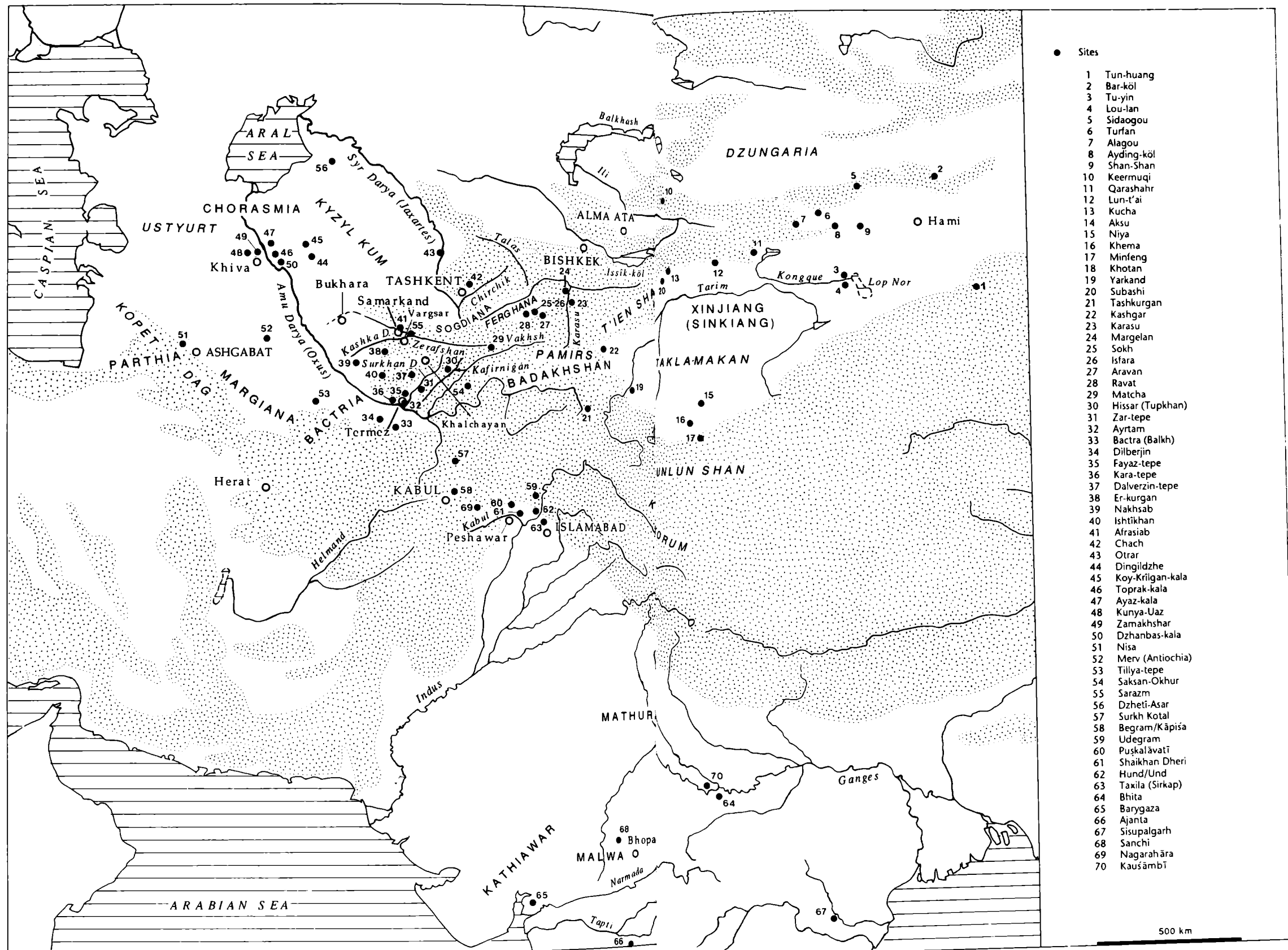


MAP 4. The Hsiung-nu, the Yüeh-chih and the Kushan kingdom.

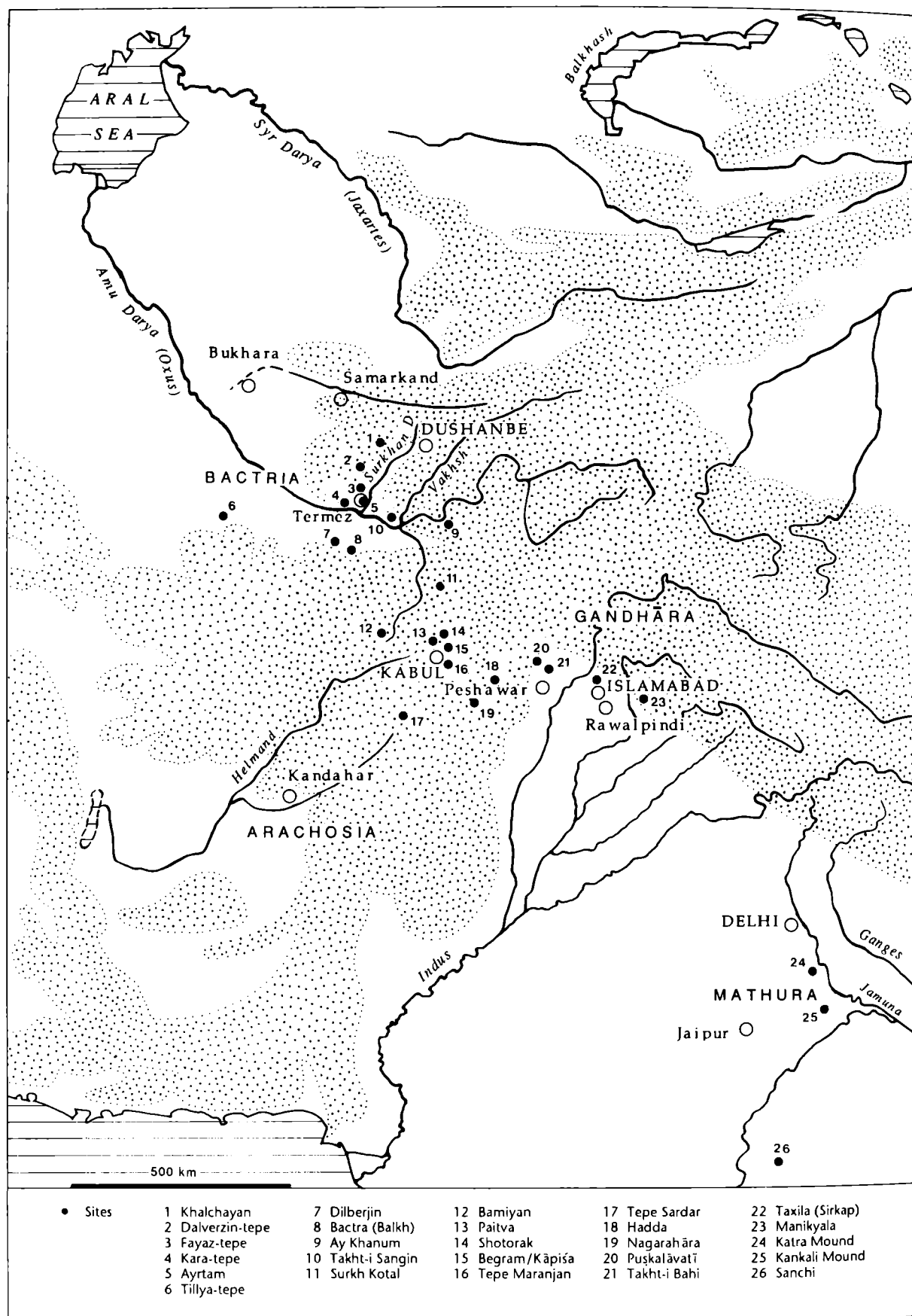


MAP 5. The Silk Route.

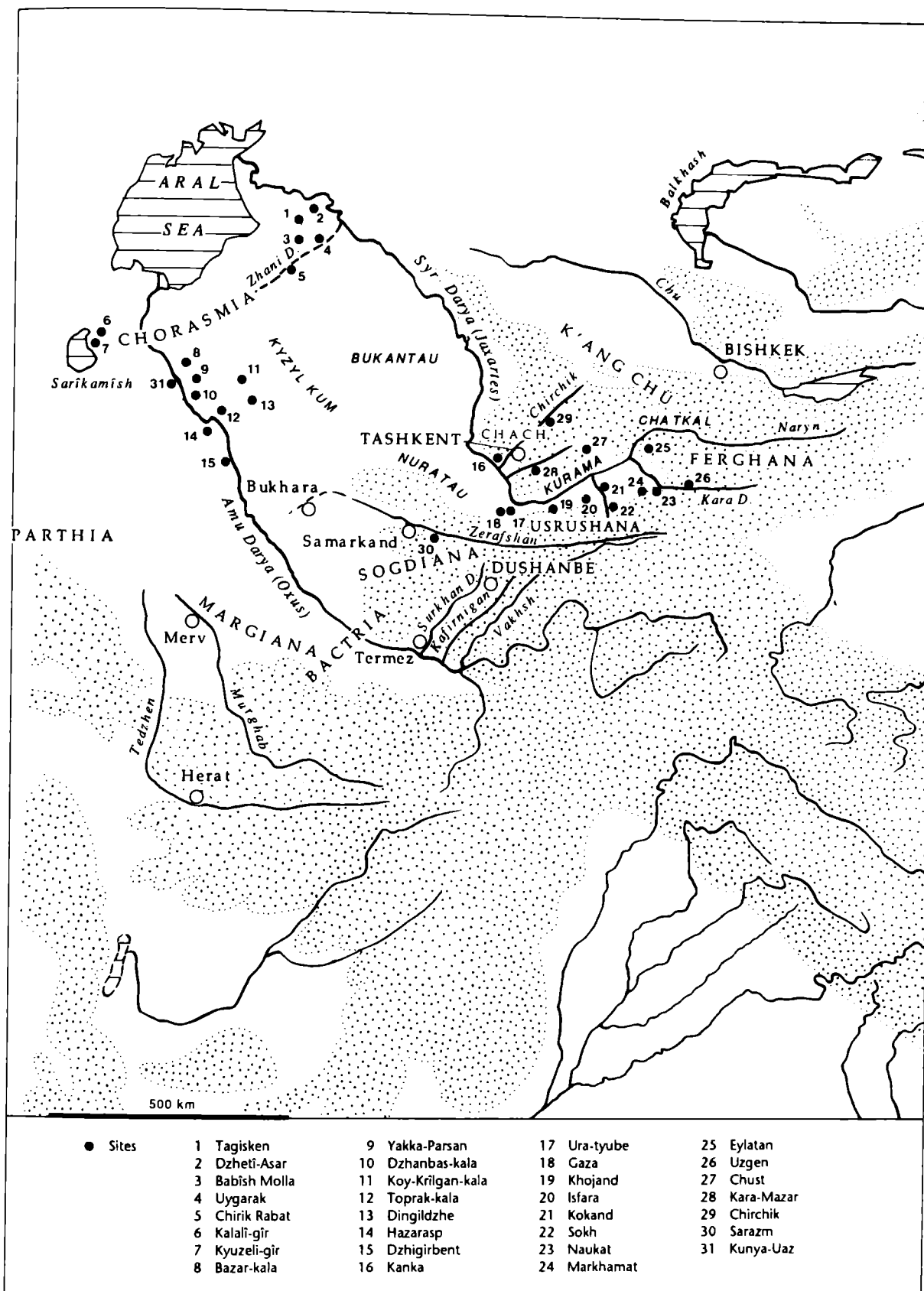




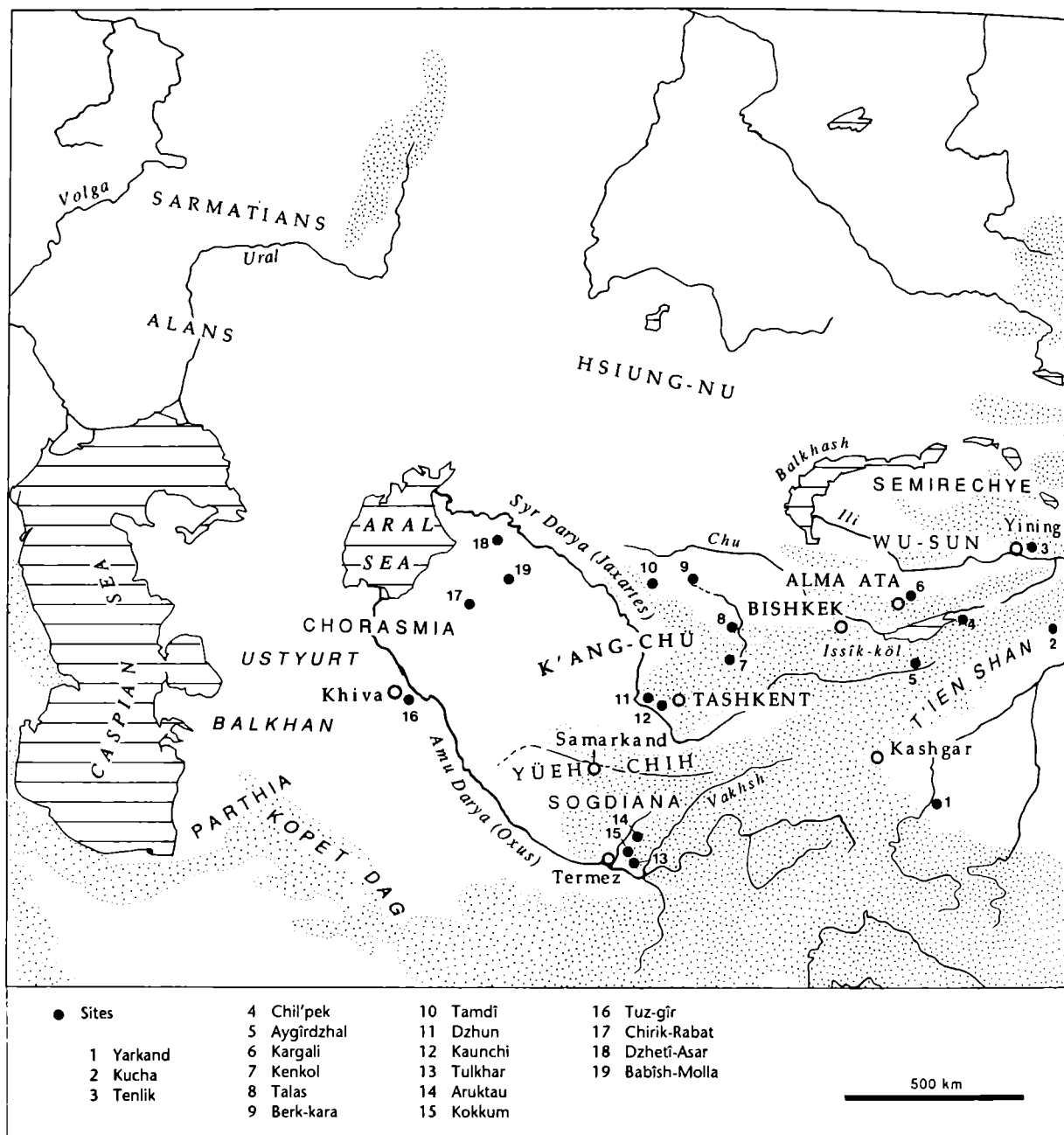
MAP 6. The nomadic and urban cultures in Central Asia.



MAP 7. Sites of Kushan art.



MAP 8. States in north-western Central Asia.



MAP 9. The nomads of northern Central Asia after the invasion of Alexander.

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## BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

### ABBREVIATIONS OF PERIODICALS

- AA = *Arts asiatiques*, Paris  
AAH = *Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, Budapest  
Acta Ant. Hung. = *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, Budapest  
AM = *Asia Major*, London  
AO = *Arkheologicheskie otkritiya*, Moscow  
AOH = *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, Budapest  
AP = *Ancient Pakistan*, Peshawar  
ART = *Arkheologicheskie raboti v Tadzhikistane*, Dushanbe  
AS = *Afghan Studies*, Kabul  
ASIAR = *Archaeological Survey of India Annual Report*, New Delhi  
BCH = *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*, Paris  
BEFEO = *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient*, Paris  
BSOAS = *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, London  
CAH = *The Cambridge Ancient History*, Cambridge  
CHM = *Cahiers d'histoire mondiale/Journal of World History*, Neuchâtel  
CII = *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Calcutta  
CRAI = *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles lettres*, Paris  
EI = *Epigraphia Indica*, New Delhi  
EV = *Epigrafika Vostoka*, Moscow/Leningrad  
EW = *East and West*, Rome  
IANTSSR = *Izvestiya Akademii nauk TSSR*, Ashkhabad  
IIA = *Institut po izucheniyu arkheologii*  
IIJ = *Indo-Iranian Journal*, The Hague  
IMKU = *Istoriya material'noy kul'turi Uzbekistana*, Tashkent  
IOON Tadz. SSR = *Izvestiya Otdeleniya obshchestvennikh nauk Akademii nauk Tadzhikskoy SSR*, Dushanbe  
IsMeo.R.M. = *Istituto italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente. Reports and Memoirs*, Rome  
JA = *Journal asiatique*, Paris  
JAOS = *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, New Haven, Conn.



- JBBRAS* = *Journal of the Bengal Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*  
*JCA* = *Journal of Central Asia*, Islamabad  
*JNSI* = *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, Varanasi  
*JRAS* = *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, London  
*KhAEE* = *Khorezmskiye arkheologo-êtnograficheskiye êkspeditsii*, Moscow  
*KSIA* = *Kratkie soobshcheniya Instituta arkheologii*, Kiev  
*KSIIMK* = *Kratkie soobshcheniya Instituta Istorii material'noy kul'turi*, Moscow  
*MAIKTSA* = *Mezhdunarodnaya assotsiatsiya po izucheniyu Kul'tur Tsentral'noy Azii*  
*MDAFA* = *Mémoires de la Délégation archéologique française en Afghanistan*, Paris  
*MDAFI* = *Mémoires de la Délégation archéologique française en Iran*, Paris  
*ME* = *Materiali po êtnografii*, Moscow/Leningrad  
*MIA* = *Materiali i issledovaniya po arkheologii*, Moscow/Leningrad  
*MIFAOC* = *Mémoires de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire*, Cairo  
*MKhe* = *Materiali Khorezmskoy êkspeditsii*, Moscow  
*MU* = *Materiali Uzbekistana*, Tashkent  
*MYuTAKE* = *Materiali Yuzhno-Turkmenistanskoy arkheologicheskoy kompleksnoy, ekspeditsii*, Leningrad  
*NC* = *Numismatic Chronicle*, London  
*ONU* = *Obshchestvennâ nauka v Uzbekistane*, Tashkent  
*OS* = *Orientalia Suecana*, Uppsala  
*PIIE* = *Polevie issledovaniya Instituta êtnografii*, Moscow  
*RA* = *Revue archéologique*, Paris  
*RN* = *Revue numismatique*, Paris  
*SA* = *Sovetskaya arkheologiya*, Moscow  
*SAI* = *Svod arkheologicheskikh istochnikov*, Moscow/Leningrad  
*SE* = *Sovetskaya êtnografiya*, Moscow/Leningrad  
*SNV* = *Strani i narodi Vostoka*, Moscow  
*TANTadzSSR* = *Trudi Akademii nauk Tadzhikskoy SSR*, Dushanbe  
*TIANTadzSSR* = *Trudi Instituta istorii Akademii nauk Tadzhikskoy SSR*, Dushanbe  
*TMKIATSAKe* = *Trudi mezhdunarodnoy konferentsii po istorii arkheologii i kul'turi Tsentral'noy Azii v Kushanskuyu êpoku*, Moscow  
*TNIYaLI* = *Tuvinskiy nauchno-issledovatel'skiy institut yazika, literatury i istorii*, Kyzyl  
*TP* = *T'oung-Pao*, Leiden  
*TrGE* = *Trudi Gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha*, Leningrad  
*TrGIM* = *Trudi Gosudarstvennogo Istoricheskogo muzeya*, Moscow  
*TrSAGU* = *Trudi Sredneaziatskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta*, Tashkent  
*Trudi IIA AN Uzb. SSR* = *Trudi Instituta istorii, arkheologii Akademii nauk Uzbekskoy SSR*, Tashkent  
*Trudi IIAE AN Turkmen. SSR* = *Trudi Instituta istorii i arkheologii i êtnografii Akademii nauk Turkmeniskoy SSR*, Ashkhabad  
*Trudi KhAEE* = *Trudi Khorezmskoy arkheologo-etnograficheskoy ekspeditsii*, Moscow  
*Trudi YuTAKE* = *Trudi Yuzhno-Turkmenistanskoy arkheologicheskoy kompleksnoy ekspeditsii*, Leningrad  
*USA* = *Uspekhi Sredneaziatskoy Arkheologii*, Leningrad  
*VDI* = *Vestnik Drevney Istorii*, Moscow  
*VKF AN UzSSR* = *Vestnik Karakalpakskogo filiala Akademii nauk Uzbekskoy SSR*

ZDMG = *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, Wiesbaden

ZDO = *Zemli drevnego orosheniya*, Moscow

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